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About the Cover

UTRPF troops make a first contact which may well be their last in this month's cover by Jim Holloway.

Polyhedron® NEWSZINE

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Elminster's Everwinking Eye

Mysterious Turmish

by Ed Greenwood

Turmish? Make sure ye take a map—or hire a guide ye can trust . . . or 10 winters from now, ye'll still be trying to find yer way out o' that land. Most folk give up, I hear, an' just settle down. Ye can find worse places in the Realms.

Mirt "the Moneylender" of Waterdeep to a Waterdhavian merchant, *Year of the Harp*

Elminster arrived in my study recently with a gift: a skull full of snails. He had a good chuckle at my expression before he explained that it was an ancient custom to give such, er, delicacies as greeting-gifts in Turmish, a land I'd asked him about a time or two. Now, it seemed, he was in the mood to talk about the place, so we settled down with the upturned skull before my fire, to roast snails on bamboo skewers and then dip them in garlic butter (the roasting's from the Realms, the garlic butter my firm addition to the proceedings) and chat about Turmish—a hitherto mysterious land of the Realms (because Elminster hasn't said much about it, not because folk in Faerûn find it all that mysterious). This and several columns to follow are the result of our evening of snail-eating (yes, I got sick—and yes, Elminster loved the garlic butter . . . and wasn't sick, of course).

How Most Folk See Turmish

Most humans in the Realms think of Turmish only as a land that men with pointed beards and pointed helms want to escape, traveling the rest of Faerûn as mercenaries or well-armed, fair-dealing, close-mouthed traders.

The impartial, battle-skilled warriors of Turmish sometimes seem to be everywhere. This perception has given the Sword Coast, the Dragonreach, and the Vast the expression "the hordes of Turmish." The phrase usually refers to great numbers or speed, as in: "And then they all fired their bows at once—the air was black with shafts, I tell thee! They rained down like the very hordes of Turmish!" or "He came down that hill as if the very hordes of Turmish were after him!"

Most folk in the Realms don't know much more than that about Turmish, although many have heard the saying that "Turmish is the gateguard of the Vilhon," referring to its location on the north side of the mouth of the fertile, perenially-overpopulated Vilhon Reach.

What a Visitor Sees of Turmish

More than one noble perusing a detailed map of the lands about The Sea of Fallen Stars for the first time frowns, puts a finger on Turmish, and says, "Something's been left out here, surely? Where're the cities?"

Well, there's Alaghôn, of course; capital of the realm, and a walled, spired city the equal of the richest Calimshan or Sembia has to offer. Many merchants say it is very like Telflamm—clear across the sea.

Most maps also show the upland woodworkers' and hunters' town, Gildenglade. And there the names and markings stop, though what are obviously valleys are named the Perloush, the Allascar, and the Halondar.

An alert visitor who sees much of Turmish will realize that there are no other large settlements—only crossroads-markets, picturesque villages around keeps and temples, and hamlets clustered around wells, springs, or clearwater lakes. Many visitors end up thinking that Turmishans are up to something—and that their cities are hidden somewhere, perhaps in the mountains that wall in the arrowhead-shaped realm on two of its three sides.

It's true that gnome and dwarven cities burrow into the mountains, and the foothills contain a few elven forest-holds and halfling burrow-villages. But the humans in Turmish seem to prefer living close to the land.

And no wonder: Turmish is a beautiful realm. It's a land of gardens, farm fields, and orchards, all walled with hedges or tumble-stone fences, and sheltered by many woodlots. The rolling pastoral landscape is crisscrossed by a maze of unmapped, nameless lanes—dirt roads that wander snakelike through a land of many trees and countless small streams.

Turmish lacks large rivers as well as cities, but those who don't get lost easily say the pools and "draws" (the local term for creeks) teem with fish, the forests are alive with game, and the mountains hold fearsome bears and more sinister beasts (such as peryton and leucrotta), as well as herds of sure-footed peak goats.

Vineyards are plentiful, and Turmishans make potent fruit liqueurs from their overripe and winter-withered vineyard leavings. Travelers should beware: though the little of this that gets exported is usually tinted ripe red or amber, it's often clear as water when served up in Turmish and has laid low many an unsuspecting traveler. The antics of drunken outlanders are a common source of amusement for Turmishan farmers.

What Visitors Seldom See of Turmish

Those who whisper of mysteries and hidden things in Turmish are seldom dealing closely with truth, but they may have heard embellishments of the way things are in Turmish.

Hidden in the heart of the farmlands are monasteries dedicated to Chauntea, Selune—and Loviatar. These are seldom large fortresses, tending instead to be large gardens containing open-air altars and worship-glades. Like the land around them, their rites tend to focus on fertility.

This attention to the sensual has given birth to wild tavern-tales that inevitably grow in the telling as they cross the Realms, until one hears of packs of naked Turmishans running across the fields in the moonlight, howling as they hunt each other ("A slight exaggeration," one Turmish trader said with a smile, when a drunken Sembite merchant asked him straight out about such doings).

It is true that thieves and brigands from around the Inner Sea often flee to Turmish to hide from creditors and other pursuers along its winding lanes . . . and

then to raid temple-farms in search of riches. It is also true that they find little or no gold. But in keeping with the faiths that dominate in Turmish, they are welcomed warmly and leave to tell still more tales.

There is an old belief in Turmish that for the land to be fertile, riches must be sewn in it—literally. Handfuls of gold coins and gems are buried deeply (below plow-bite depth) beneath many a field in the realm—but acquisitive folk who develop an itch to dig are warned that Turmishans like to ambush despoilers of the land in force, fighting furiously for the good of their land.

Turmish was once home to an infamous mage, Tauthryn "the Mad," who used his Art to breed strange beasts (such as bulettes, perytons, and weird crossbreeds of all sorts). He was slain by adventurers over two centuries ago, but the descendants of his creations still roam Turmish. Some monsters encountered today may be replicates of the originals; Turmish is an area where deepspawn were naturally abundant, and may still be found in many a remote mountain cave.

All of these monster problems attracted many druids to Turmish. At least three Hierophants still dwell in the realm, wandering its deepest woods and remote mountain vales and highlands.

No good maps of Turmish are known. Combined with the realm's winding lanes and the "overgrown" character of its rolling countryside, this makes it an ideal land deliberately to get lost in. Only its Realms-wide reputation of "crowded" (earned because of its proximity to Vilhon Reach lands that are overcrowded, and because of the many traveling Turmishans, usually assumed by less mobile Faerûnians to be displaced) keeps it from becoming a base for every unsavory band of deceivers who've made enemies and find themselves in need of a hideaway.

The Shape of Life in Turmish

Turmish is a peaceful realm—though brigands soon find that every third or fourth Turmishan seems to have a deadly eye with the longbow. Restless, sword-loving Turmishans take horse elsewhere, usually serving as hiresworks for seven years or so at a time before they hunger to return home.

Besides restless folk, Turmish exports a lot of food (mostly for hungry mouths up and down the Vilhon Reach) and another sort of people. Farmholding couples (or among local worshippers of Chauntea, "families" of four inter-married folk, two male and two female) tend to pass on their farms to their children or chosen heirs as soon as these inheritors have seen 20 winters. Some "retired" farmholders retreat to a life of worship and careful tending of a particular woodlot or planted plot, but most travel the Realms as merchants or warriors.

This is the reason the rest of Faerûn sees so many Turmishans of about 40 winters: folk usually content that they've lived a good life and have accomplished things of worth, so they are calm, patient, and confident in battle or the intrigues of trade. They tend to be hardened to heavy work, but not bent or broken by keeping at farm-labors until they're too old to go on. Turmishans tend to aid fellow countrymen (even strangers) whom they meet on the road, and to keep in contact with those they do discover.

Between the restless experiments of youth and the travels of middle age, most Turmishans are content with relaxed, slow-paced lives in tune with local weather and with an eye to the balance of the land. The prosperity of the realm leaves few in real need. To have all they want, only those driven by a hunger for power need go elsewhere.

Turmishans are independent folk. Easy-going and slow to anger they may be, but most will take orders from others only so long as those commands seem sensible and allow the recipient to see a worthwhile goal, or a clear time of freedom, in the future. Conditions that don't allow a Turmishan a chance to do things his or her own way will be changed by a determined Turmishan—or fled from. (Enslaved Turmishans either go mad, fight their way to freedom, or die in the trying, persisting even when success seems impossible.)

A typical Turmishan sets aside at least one day in every nine to "chase the sun"—that is, to pursue a hobby or personal interest. Often this is as mundane as brewing beer or whittling, but it may be mastering the intricacies of a harp, or even the spells of a mage. This custom is the origin of the expression "On the ninth day," used in Turmish and elsewhere to mean "I'll get around to it . . . it'll be done or dealt with in time, but not right now."

This chance to be oneself, combined with the easy-going nature of most folk in Turmish, and the lack of oppressive authority, makes Turmish a land of contented folk.

The Scarbarlatine

Of old, a realm of pirates and fisherfolk flourished in the northerly coastal regions of what is now Turmish. This land of Scarbarla turned its attention to the sea and so expanded west and south into the dense forests of the day only slowly.

When expansion did occur, it provoked raids from the satyrs and other woodland denizens. And then a war began that ultimately destroyed both sides.

Scarbarla's piracy earned it no friends and many enemies, and in the end the Scarbarlatine found themselves attacked from the sea by men, harried by monstrous creatures inland, and worn down by a decade of severe winters.

One spring more than 500 years ago, the last survivors fled, leaving behind only stone walls and buildings. Today, a few of these ruins survive in the northerly coastal reaches of Turmish: a port whose harbor is almost entirely silted up, several walled towns, and two villages.

These ruins (plus the occasional isolated tower or mound of collapsed stone) are collectively known as "the Scarbarlatine" for the folk who built them. During the past 400 or so years, they've been rebuilt and inhabited by successive waves of visitors, restless Turmishan experimenters, and folk who dream of things being more as in Sembia, Cormyr, or wherever else they fancy.

Visitors who've seen only these places—whose names and populations often change from season to season—may have very different impressions of what Turmish is like. Their accounts are another source of contradictions in the way the rest of Faerûn sees Turmish.

Over our snails, Elminster made it clear that while this realm may largely keep to itself and hence is easy to ignore, it may soon become very important in the wider affairs of the Inner Sea lands of Faerûn because of some interests and forces that have arisen in its picturesque depths. In columns to come, we'll look at these rising folk in Turmish and at other facets of this fascinating realm.

❑

Unnatural Selection

A One-Round BUGHUNTERS™ Adventure for Six Players

by Lester W. Smith

In its first attempts at colonizing the stars, United Terra is discovering that the galaxy hosts horrible dangers. But given the incredible distances involved, the extent of those dangers remains unknown. In a groping effort to gain better information of Sol's galactic neighborhood, United Terra has decided for the moment to pepper the stars in Sol's vicinity with a virtual shotgun blast of colony ships.

Whereas Terra's initial colonies were sent out in colonizer ships—huge, lumbering vessels carrying great contingents of colonists, incredible arrays of equipment, several years worth of supplies, and entire companies of synthetic human troops for protection—the colonies of this new effort are being sent in lightly loaded combat landers carrying just half a hundred colonists, minimal prefab buildings, barely enough supplies for six months of survival, and a mere squad of low-ranking United Terra Reconnaissance and Peacekeeping Force (UTRPF) troops. Nor do the ships remain with the colonists; rather, they pause just long enough to off-load their contents before returning to Terra. Other, smaller ships are sent to resupply the colony on a semi-annual basis.

The reasoning behind UT's new strategy is twofold. In launching small colonies with tiny UTRPF contingents, UT keeps losses minimal should a colony be destroyed. And by keeping a steady stream of supply ships flowing to these colonies and back, the colonies are closely monitored so that Terra learns about its enemies when they attack.

The PCs in this adventure make up a squad of UTRPF troops sent along with a colony to 61 Cygni A, planet two. There they will eventually meet and battle a Hunter (pages 105-107 of the BUGHUNTERS rule book).

Along the way to that climax, they experience a number of lesser events: some significant, others just red herrings.

The GM should keep in mind that, simply put, the purpose of a BUGHUNTERS adventure is to give PCs a chance to use heavy weaponry against deadly aliens. There will be ample chances to role-play and to investigate, but these are merely appetizers for the final conflict's main course.

Assemblage

The purpose of this scene is three-fold: 1) It gives the players a moment to introduce themselves and their characters to one another 2) It establishes somewhat the tone of a synner's life 3) It communicates to the PCs their current mission.

> As brand-new UTRPF (utter-puff) troopers, you are quartered at UTRPF's training facilities on Stargate station. Stargate hovers roughly between the Earth and Moon, at LaGrange point 5, to be exact, and contains a civilian population of nearly 100,000 people. Roughly one-fifth of the station's ring is taken up by the UTRPF HQ and training grounds.
>
> It is a Monday morning, hour 0430. You finished your period of basic training some weeks ago, and each completed your individual occupational training last Friday. According to tradition, you should have received weekend passes immediately thereafter, then been allowed some R&R time in Stargate's civilian quarter. Instead, you received orders to report to the Marines' Third Brigade, Echo Company, where you were assembled as Squad B of Second Platoon. Saturday and Sunday found you putting in long hours at the mission simulators. You ran through an array of different tasks, from tracking a tiger-analogue through steaming jungles, to rescuing avalanche victims on a mountain-side. (Mark 50 temporary experience points on your character sheet; these can be used to boost important skill attempts during this adventure, if necessary.)
>
> Now you've been assigned a real mission. PFC Jackson has just finished reading your mission orders aloud. You are to accompany a group of 50 new colonists to the second world orbiting 61 Cygni A. The trip will be aboard a lightly loaded combat lander. It is carrying only a half-load of colonists and supplies, enough material for six months of survival. And during flight, its 30 synners' berths will be occupied only by yourselves and a starship crew of three.
>
> The pilot is Star Lieutenant Myers; the copilot and navigator is Chief Warrant Officer Stratton; and the engineer is Warrant Officer Briggs. You are to obey their orders explicitely while aboard ship. On the ground, you will answer to Mayor Stephens in all issues not specifically military. PFC Jackson will be the final authority in such matters, and Stephens will be happy to defer to Jackson's expertise.
>
> Your tour of duty on planet is six months. At the end of that period, a supply ship will arrive. The captain of that ship will have authorization to decide whether to extend your stay or to bring you back, depending upon the colony's condition.
>
> The ship leaves in 59 minutes, from docking bay 37. What do you wish to do until then?

The PCs need about 15 minutes to pack their gear, and it takes them another 10 minutes to travel to the docking bay. That leaves them 34 minutes of free time. They will probably want to pick up more ammunition for their weapons, and possibly other gear such as electronic binoculars, as well as entertainment materials for the long trip.

You may assume that the latter is readily available at the PX (Post Exchange store). For ammunition and specialized equipment, some of the PCs may try to bully or bluff someone at the Supply Depot; others may wish to contact black marketeers and buy it. In either case, you may have them make a Luck skill check (half Psyche for everyone except Fisk, who actually has the skill). Then let them have a case or two of something they're looking for: Up to 2,000 rounds of ammunition, a couple dozen grenades, two or three binoculars,

etc. Don't give them everything, however: Stress how pressed for time they are; explain that something they want is out of stock, or that the black marketeer can't get it to them in time. Remember, too, that they'll have to pay the black marketeer: Set a sum of roughly $100 per case, and let them dicker. In general, have fun messing with their heads. Any extra equipment they acquire will have very little effect (if any) on the climax of the adventure. But it might make the players feel better to have gained it.

Of course, once they have the extra gear, they'll have to think up some way to get it aboard the ship. There are UTRPF guards at the airlock. The guards visually inspection the PCs' gear. Their primary concern is to see that the firing assemblies are taken out of the PCs' weapons and given into PFC Jackson's safe keeping. They get very suspicious if they find that the PCs are carrying a couple of cases of extra equipment. The PCs may try to bluff or bribe their way past these guards. Or they may try to forge orders authorizing their extra gear. If they come up with any reasonable sounding plan, give them a decent chance for it to work, perhaps making them roll against a particular attribute to succeed. Failure simply means the extra gear will be confiscated.

If at any time the PCs ask about stocks of ammunition aboard the ship, tell them that there is a note in their orders to the effect that the starship pilot and mayor will be able to resupply them, if either judges it necessary. This means that the PCs' ultimate firepower is in the hands of you, the GM.

Journey

The purpose of this scene is primarily to hammer home to the PCs a sense of their isolation, far from Terra's aid. The power outage described below is a red herring that will help achieve this, and it should certainly help to make the PCs generally jumpy.

> Once aboard the ship, you are lead to the sleeper modules by Engineer Briggs, who then rushes back toward the drive section. There are five sleeper modules, each with six bunks. The first has been taken by the starship crew. You are assigned to the fourth. The others echo emptily.
>
> You are still stowing the last of your gear when the intercom pings and the pilot's voice rings out, "Launch in 90 seconds. Launch in 90 seconds. Everyone buckle in."
>
> Ninety seconds later, the ship drops away from Stargate. Then there is a growing thrust of acceleration from the drives at the rear, and you're off toward the stars.

Give the players a few moments to react to their new surroundings. In the PCs' dealings with the crew, play the pilot and copilot as too busy and aloof to pay the PCs much attention. Only Briggs has any time at all to deal with them, and even that will be a bit rushed and strained. Like the pilot and copilot, the engineer would rather that the PCs just sit tight and not mess with anything for the duration of the flight. On the other hand, all three of these crewmembers are synners, and they can at least imagine how bored the marines are; so they won't be completely unapproachable, merely distant.

If the PCs want to investigate the ship, let them. But if they begin poking around too much—especially if they start messing with the colonists' cargo—have one of the ship's officers call them on the carpet.

> The first month slips by without incident, then the second month, then the third, the fourth, the fifth, the sixth, the seventh, the eighth . . .
>
> Halfway through the 13th month, all the ship's power suddenly goes off! Light, heat, air circulation, even gravity, all die unexpectedly. Immediately, dim red emergency lights come on, with a blaring claxon, and the engineer comes flying down from the direction of the first sleeper, headed toward the drive section. There is a panicked look on Briggs' face.

You may wish to have the PCs all make a Reflexes roll to get out of Briggs' way. If anyone fails, the engineer sideswipes them on the way through, recovers, cursing, and continues onward.

When the PCs investigate, they'll learn that the drives have shut down for no apparent reason, and with them every system aboard the ship, including the stasis pods. Briggs shortly gets the drives restarted, and power is restored, but the ship's central computer and the stasis pods have to be rebooted. The PCs learn that one of the colonists and the colony's cat have died as a result of the sudden loss of stasis. But everyone else survived, as did the colony's dog (a St. Bernard, if the players ask); and the three pods worth of livestock embryos are fine.

This event is merely a red herring, to unsettle the PCs. Once power is completely restored, the ship resumes its journey, and the next two months pass uneventfully.

Landfall

The purpose of this scene is to introduce the PCs to the world they will be living on, and to let them know that there is something nasty lurking about.

> Finally, the journey is over, and you stand at a viewport, looking down on a very green world with stripes of cloud.

If the PCs ask anything about a survey of the world, tell them the following:

1) The planet's habitable areas are primarily rain forest.

2) The largest herbivore is equivalent to a gazelle, and it is only aggressive when threatened.

3) In three whole days of surveying, the largest carnivore the team found is roughly the size and shape of a badger.

> Once orbit is established, the copilot comes looking for you.
>
> "Grab your gear and come along with me," Stratton says. "We're going to go find a suitable landing spot."
>
> You follow the copilot back through the ship to the cargo module, where a scoutship waits, facing sternward. Stratton takes the pilot's seat, Jackson the copilot's, and the rest of you have to stand in the drive corridor, clutching at straps that hang from the ceiling.
>
> The starship's main cargo ramp descends, the scoutship rolls forward, and you're dropping toward the surface."

Have yourself a bit of fun describing to the players the way the copilot flies the scoutship. Stratton drops it heart-stoppingly quickly through the clouds, down to treetop level, then sets the vessel to skimming just above the trees. For the standing PCs, in

particular, the ride is rough.

After an hour or so of this, Stratton drops the ship into an open meadow. Everyone disembarks while the copilot paces about the meadow, checking the ground's evenness and the clearing's overall size. Some or all of the PCs may choose to scout the edges of the meadow at this point, perhaps even into the trees. But nothing happens.

Within a few minutes, Stratton will confer with PFC Jackson, pointing out that there isn't really a large enough, flat enough spot to land the starship, and that the trees would have to be cut back several meters on each side to make room for the colony's prefab buildings. So it's back into the scoutship with everyone, for some more tree-hugging, heart-stopping flight.

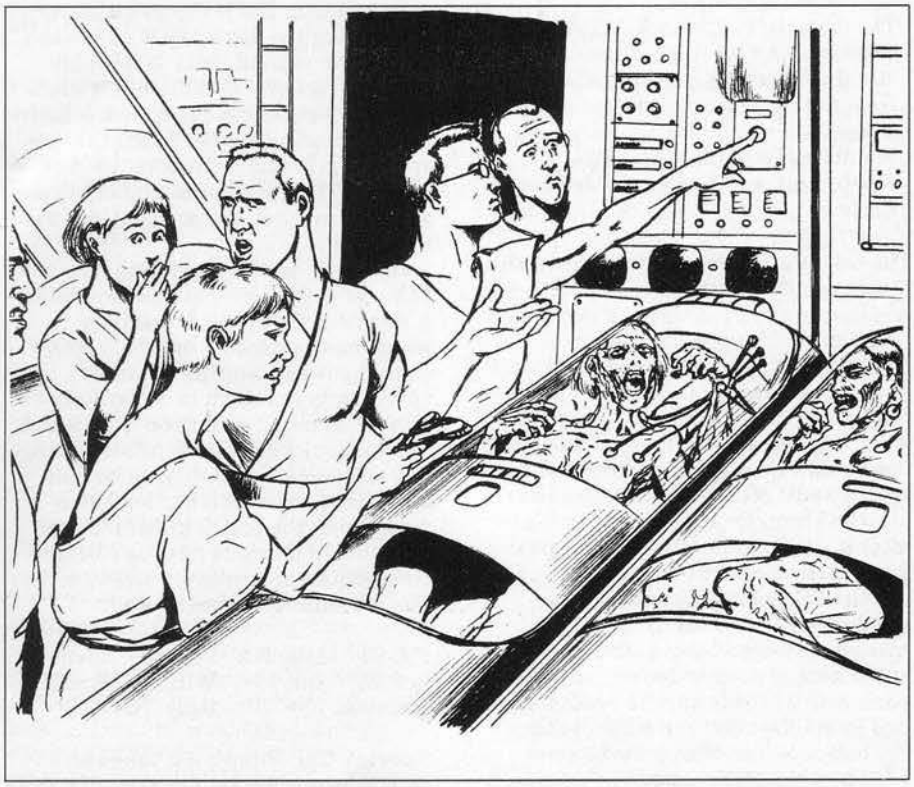
This continues for most of the day, until finally, near nightfall, a perfect site is discovered. Stratton lands the ship again, and everyone gets out to check it over.

Again, some or all of the PCs may choose to scout the clearing's perimeter. After a bit, have someone near the forest edge notice a rank odor blowing toward them on the wind, and a stealthy but heavy rustling among the trees. This is the Hunter's first appearance. This Hunter has standard stats, as listed below:

Fit: 80	Lea: NA	Psy: 60	Cha: 05
Ref: 75	Int: 15	Wil: 70	Pos: NA
Stamina: 100		Body: NA	

Special: This Hunter has taken the shape of the local badger-like carnivore, but it is as large as a bear. Its claws have a damage rating of 1d8(4), but it has no other special abilities at this time. For more information on hunters, see pages 105-107 in the BUGHUNTERS™ game book.

If the PCs enter the woods, the Hunter will attack. But, after taking only 10 points of damage, it will decide it is outmatched and will flee, burrowing into the undergrowth to get out of the PCs' sight, then oozing into the ground—if necessary—to hide from them. Don't let the PCs see it melt away, however. They should remain convinced that it is a giant badger-thing at this point. Of course, there will be a bit of scary mystery to the thing's disappearance. The PCs might follow its tracks, for instance, only to have them end abruptly (as if the beast had taken flight).



Beachhead

In this scene, the colonists are wakened, their cargo off-loaded, and the colony buildings assembled.

> With the giant badger-thing driven off, Stratton takes you back to the starship. When morning comes to the clearing below, Myers gently lands the starship, and Briggs begins decanting the colonists from the stasis pods. It is left to you marines to protect the clearing's perimeter until all the cargo is off-loaded and the colony's electric fence can be erected. The mayor is not at all happy to learn of your tussle with the giant badger-thing.
>
> By nightfall, everything has been unloaded, the fence is up, and the outer shell of the city hall building has been assembled, providing a place for the colonists to lay out their sleeping bags. A makeshift tent has been put up outside for you marines.
>
> The starship lifts off, leaving you to your own devices.

You may want to play out the PCs' report to the mayor, who is the first of the colonists to be wakened.

Also, have the players describe to you their plans for patrol and night watches. Nothing of significance occurs for the few days that the colony is being assembled.

The only exception to this lull in the action is that if the PCs actually patrol the woods, successful Searching (Int), Survival (Lea), or Luck (Psy) rolls may let them discover the partially devoured carcasses of local creatures. A further Survival (Int), Xenological Theory (Lea), or General Medicine (Lea) roll for each carcass, if successful, will reveal not only claw marks, but also deep puncture wounds—as from long fangs. In later carcasses, the puncture wounds are surrounded by necrotic tissues, as from a strong poison. (As explained in the last scene, the Hunter remains in the area, adapting itself for new attacks and defenses, for a final attack on the colony.)

A Mauling

This scene is primarily a red herring, but it also sets up the dog's temporary disappearance. In horror story terms, it is a momentary fright that gets laughed off, putting a person off guard for a real terror that immediately follows.

The days pass by without incident. Then, about a week after the starship's leaving, you hear a scream from the opposite side of the compound, and a man comes stumbling from the edge of the woods, holding bloodied hands over his face.

The colony's doctor runs to the wounded man's aid. You may judge, as GM, whether or not the PCs get there first.

In any event, upon investigation, the PCs discover that the wounded colonist has several bloody but shallow claw marks across his face. When they ask what happened, he tells them that he was taking the dog for a romp in the woods, when something like a squirrel attacked him. He thinks the dog ran after it. His wounds seem appropriate for a squirrel attack.

If the PCs follow his path into the woods, they'll eventually find a nest of mashed and dead baby squirrel-things at the base of a bush. Nearby lays a stick with a bloody end. The colonist had found the nest, and was crushing the baby squirrel-things for no good reason, when their mother returned unexpectedly and launched herself at his face.

The absurdity and cruelty of what has happened should get the players riled enough to forget any unnatural suspicions they may have about the dog. If they go looking for the dog, they will not find it, though it will return in a couple of hours, as explained in the next scene.

Fido Returns

After a couple of hours, the dog comes wandering back into camp. Tongue lolling and tail wagging, it trots across the clearing toward the town hall.

When it arrives there, it reaches up with one front paw, grasps the front door handle, opens the door, and slips inside.

A woman screams from inside.

This scene is primarily a battle, but even here role-playing is important. Specifically, while some players might suspect from the start that the dog is now the enemy, their characters have no reason to believe that. If you just blithely read the text above, they should be stunned enough to give you time to finish. But if the players insist on shooting the dog when it enters the compound, remind them to role-play their character. If that doesn't work, it is entirely reasonable to have a colonist who is standing nearby knock the synner's gun barrel down as the shot goes off. Then, while the synner argues with the colonist, the dog gets into the town hall.

The "dog" is actually the Hunter the PCs met before. Ever since they chased it away the first time, it has been watching the colony from the woods, studying it and waiting for an opportunity to return in better form for combat. It has preyed upon local fauna, developing longer claws, poisoned fangs, and armored skin, as well as healing the damage done to it earlier. Upon discovering the dog, it killed the poor thing and took on its form as a disguise. Its statistics are repeated below, with the new abilities listed as well.

Fit: 80	Lea: NA	Psy: 60	Cha: 05
Ref: 75	Int: 15	Wil: 70	Pos: NA
Stamina: 100		Body: NA	

Special: The Hunter has taken on several new abilities since the PCs last met it.

Disguise: The Hunter looks like the colonists' dog.

Armored Skin: Underneath the dog-like hair, the Hunter has a tough layer of skin that absorbs 5 points of damage. (Note: No lethality effect is listed, because Hunters take only stamina damage.)

Hardened Claws: For its primary attack, this Hunter has developed extremely hard, sharp claws, which have a damage rating of 1d10(5).

Poison Fangs: When atop a victim (as after a tackle), this Hunter may also make a second attack each round with poison fangs. The fangs have a damage rating of 1d8(3), but if they do *any* damage to a victim (after armor), the poison rating is 3d6 on the first round. (See the BUGHUNTERS™ rules, page 53 for poison's effects.)

Once inside the town hall, the Hunter begins killing everyone it meets. There are no stats for these victims; simply assume that it takes the Hunter one round to incapacitate each. (If you're feeling merciful, you may allow the PCs a chance to save some of these colonists, explaining that they are not terribly mauled but are suffering from poison.)

For their part, the colonists will pretty much just stand about, frozen in horror, waiting to die.

The mayor is an exception: He is hiding in the closet of his office upstairs. If the dog gets to that room before the PCs do, they will find the dog standing on its hind legs, tugging at the closet door handle with both front paws, while the mayor screams in terror from inside.

As the Hunter takes damage from the PCs' attacks, its wounds close up with no visible effect other than a loss of overall body mass. This should help to horrify the PCs. Also, describe that loss of mass as a growing thinness and raggedness, not a loss of height and length. In other words, when the creature has lost half its stamina points, it will still have the same skeletal structure, but the flesh will be hanging off it in ragged shreds.

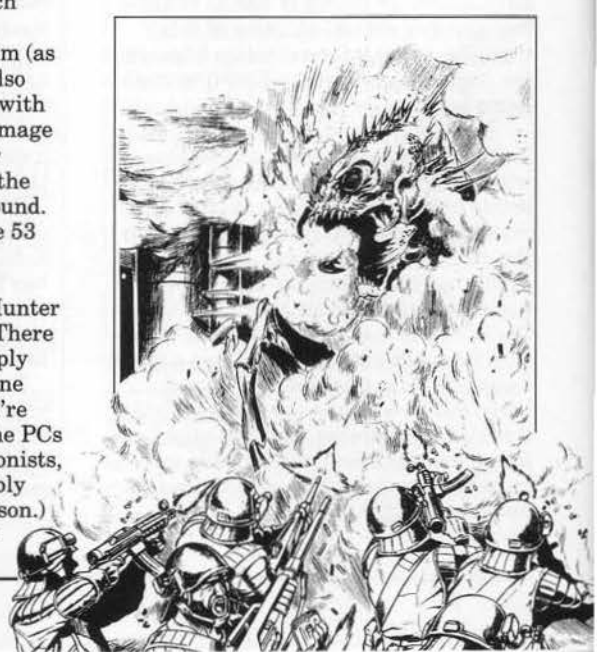
Once the Hunter has only 25 stamina points remaining, it will attempt to flee again, crashing through a window, if necessary—even one on the second floor. You may allow it a Psyche test to grow wings and sail away.

But give the PCs the opportunity for at least a shot or two at it as it flees. They'll be most satisfied if they destroy it in the end.

Mopping Up

There is no need for a denouement after the final battle. Leave it to the players to wonder whether or not this Hunter is the only serious danger on the planet, and what the PCs might face for the remainder of the six months.

❑



Jackson

Background Information
Occupation: Grunt
Rank: Private First Class
Rank Points/Income: 55/$110
Donor Background: US Army Lieutenant

Attributes

Fit: 52	Lea: 60	Psy: 48	Cha: 39
Ref: 62	Int: 42	Wil: 58	Pos: 55

Stamina Points: 40
Body Points: 18

Skills: Small Arms (Ref), Longarms (Ref), Autofire (Fit), Law (Lea), Protocol (Int), First Aid (Int), Trivia (Wil), Armed Combat (Ref), Mounted Bayonet (Ref+10), Military Science (Lea), Unarmed Combat (Ref)

Equipment: Combat knife (Dmg: 1d4(3)), Assault Rifle (3 mags, Mag: 200; RoF: 5/x8/25; Dmg: 1d12(6); Range: 50/150/260), Grenade launcher (on rifle, Mag: 15, RoF: 1; Dmg: by round type, Range: direct 100/200/300, indirect 400, flechette 25/70/100), 2 frag grenades (1 launchable, Dmg: 16/80%/4d10(4)), 2 stun grenades (1 launchable, Dmg: 16/+/+), 4 flechette rounds (for launcher, Dmg: 2d8(7)), Body Armor, helmet array, transponder (Dmg: +6(4); Init: +1)

Although you are technically only a Private First Class, your donor was an infantry lieutenant in the US Army, so you have more military expertise than would be expected of a private. Undoubtedly, that is why you were assigned to lead this rag-tag band of new synth troopers for this, your very first mission. You'll have to be careful, though, that your fellow synners give you the respect you deserve. It is probably a good idea to make them feel more comfortable with you by reminding them of your knowledge of military science, gained from your donor's training and experience. Commanding this group won't be easy, however, as its members have some disturbing quirks.

Boomer: You'll have to keep a tight rein on this trooper. Boomer seems too fond of using heavy firepower without stopping to think through a situation. And this trooper tends to treat everything as some sort of big joke.

Boomer

Background Information
Occupation: Heavy Weapons Expert
Rank: Private Two
Rank Points/Income: 54/$108
Donor Background: Factory Worker

Attributes

Fit: 57	Lea: 47	Psy: 43	Cha: 34
Ref: 60	Int: 62	Wil: 48	Pos: 39

Stamina Points: 36
Body Points: 19

Skills: Computer Systems (Int), Survival (Lea), Mechanical Maintenance (Int), Small Arms (Ref), Sidearms (Ref), Heavy Weapons (Ref), Grenade Launcher (Fit), Xenological Theory (Int), First Aid (Int), Comm Gear (Int), Armed Combat (Ref)

Equipment: Combat knife (Dmg: 1d4(3)), Heavy pistol (3 mags HEJA, Mag: 7, RoF: 3, Dmg: 3d10(7), Range: 30/60/100), Grenade launcher (Mag: 15, RoF: 1, Dmg: by round type, Range: direct 100/200/300, indirect 400, flechette 25/70/100), 4 smoke grenades (3 launchable, 5 meter radius, 12 turns), 4 frag grenades (3 launchable, Dmg: 16/80%/4d10(4)), 3 stun grenades (2 launchable, Dmg: 16/+/+), 2 incendiary grenades (1 launchable, Dmg: 16/90%/2d12(4) (+/+/per turn)), Flame Thrower (2 tanks, Mag: 10, RoF: 1/x5/10, Dmg: 2d6(4)/turn, Range: 5/10/15), Body Armor, helmet array, transponder (Dmg: +6(4), Init: +1)

You like big weapons, and big explosions! Rumor is that there are some pretty nasty creatures lurking out there among the stars, and you'd rather blow them to smithereens at a distance than have them get close enough to do you any harm. Your motto is, "Shoot *before* you see the whites of their eyes!" This, you think, is quite a funny joke. Unfortunately, UTRPF doesn't give you much ammunition, so you have to choose your targets well. But when you do get to shoot something, it's a heck of a lot of fun!

Jackson: Your squad leader, PFC Jackson, really gets on your nerves. The trooper has only one week of seniority on you, but it was enough to garner a promotion to PFC just before you were all sent on your current mission. Jackson's donor was a military officer of some sort, which probably had

Flatline

Background Information
Occupation: Radio Operator
Rank: Private Two
Rank Points/Income: 52/$104
Donor Background: Office Clerk, mental recording 46% patchy

Attributes

Fit: 50	Lea: 50	Psy: 37	Cha: 48
Ref: 60	Int: 56	Wil: 46	Pos: 47

Stamina Points: 36
Body Points: 17

Skills: Computer Systems (Int), Camouflage (Int), Searching (Int), Small Arms (Ref), Sidearms (Ref), First Aid (Int), Comm Gear (Int), Comm Procedure (Lea), Bluffing (Cha), Unarmed Combat (Ref), Low-G Maneuver (Ref)

Equipment: Combat knife (Dmg: 1d4(3)), Heavy pistol (3 mags HEJA, Mag: 7, RoF: 3, Dmg: 3d10(7), Range: 30/60/100), Combat Radio (120km range), Body Armor, helmet array, transponder (Dmg: +6(4); Init.: +1)

It isn't easy making do with only half a set of memories. But your donor died during the trauma of undergoing a mental recording for your cloned brain, and only a little over 50 percent of the memories came through. Of course, you remember perfectly everything since then (at least you think so). One thing's for certain, you know your way around communications gear very well. So you focus on that and try to steer your companions away from any questions about your donor's past. Better that they think you taciturn than that they think you mentally deficient in any way.

Jackson: Jackson, your squad leader, is a pretty confident, no-nonsense sort of trooper. You stick pretty close to Jackson, both because it is a radio operator's job to make certain the squad leader has ready access to radio communication and because Jackson's business-like attitude helps keep the others from getting you involved in a potentially embarrassing conversation.

Boomer: Boomer is as happy-go-lucky as Jackson is no-nonsense. This makes Boomer a good person for you to hang around with, because the trooper's volubility helps cover up your own relative silence. Unfortunately, Boomer

doesn't seem to get along terribly well with the squad leader, which forces you choose between the two. As yet, you haven't made a firm choice, so you vacillate between them as situations change.

Runningwolf: On the one hand, because Runningwolf is so quiet, you feel comfortable with this trooper. There is no need to explain or cover up your own relative silence. On the other hand, the other members of your squad tend to press Runningwolf to be more chummy, and when you're with the trooper you get targeted by this pressure as well. Runningwolf seems untouched by their demands, but you are less comfortable with ignoring them. So you tend to seek out Runningwolf only when the rest of the squad is otherwise occupied.

Doc Martin: The problem with hanging around with Boomer is that Boomer spends most of his time with Doc Martin. And Doc Martin watches you closely, as if suspecting that you need some sort of psychiatric help. You've found that the best way to sidetrack the medic's scrutiny is to further encourage Boomer's jokes. That way Doc is too caught up in the humor to pay much attention to you.

Fisk: Fisk irritates you. The trooper is always complaining about being lowest person on the totem pole as a result of having the lowest rank. But that's only temporary and doesn't compare with your own problems. So you tend to have very little patience with Fisk, and you often snap at the trooper.

something to do with the promotion going through so smoothly, and Jackson is forever citing bits of information from military science courses. You just hope your squad leader has enough common sense to keep you all from getting killed on this mission.

Flatline: The radio operator, who carries the nickname Flatline for some strange reason, is fairly introverted, almost surly. You wonder a bit about what secrets this trooper is hiding but don't want to waste your time digging them out.

Runningwolf: Runningwolf, the scout, is fairly quiet too. Of everyone on the squad, this trooper is probably the best soldier, with the most serious attitude toward UTRPF's role as humanity's protector. You respect Runningwolf, but you'd rather not hang around with the trooper too much. The scout's perpetual seriousness puts a damper on your fun.

Doc Martin: Of everyone on the squad, Doc Martin is your closest friend. The medic knows how to joke around while still getting the job done. Of course, protecting the medic is always a good idea.

Fisk: You like Fisk, and you sympathize with the trooper's complaints about getting all the worst jobs on the squad. So you hang about with Fisk as often as possible, joking around to make the trooper feel better. You believe that if you can infect Fisk with a sense of humor, the crappy jobs the trooper is assigned won't be quite so frustrating.

What's worse, Boomer is your junior in rank only by virtue of having been "decanted" one week later than you. Consequently, this synner seems to question your every order.

Flatline: Your radio operator seems calm enough, but you've seen the psychological reports and you're worried about the trooper's ability to stand combat stress. Flatline's donor died during the memory duplication process, so this synner is missing nearly half of the donor's memories. You wonder what effect that has on a person, especially during stressful situations. Worse, Flatline keeps this memory deficit a secret, which makes the trooper seem standoffish. Somehow, you have to find a way to make Flatline comfortable with the other synners if the squad is to pull together.

Runningwolf: This is another quiet one. Runningwolf's donor is a Native American, and the trooper seems to have brought a certain stoicism from that background. This helps make Runningwolf a good scout, but it also makes your job of pulling the squad together a bit more difficult. Fortunately, the trooper is one of the most respectful members of the group, deferring easily to your authority.

Doc Martin: Martin is a bright one, but a bit too nervous about combat. The trooper is always talking about the million-and-one ways a person can be permanently crippled, which does nothing for the squad's morale. And Martin spends far too much time with Boomer, laughing and joking instead of settling down to business.

Fisk: Fisk is the lowest ranking member of the squad, and has a lot to learn before being trusted with responsibility. But the trooper is always trying to bypass that learning process, pressing to be assigned more prestigious tasks. You'll have to rule Fisk with an iron hand to make sure the trooper learns to do as told and "pays the dues" necessary for advancement.

Runningwolf

Background Information
Occupation: Scout
Rank: Private Two
Rank Points/Income: 52/$104
Donor Background: Wealthy; mental recording 6% patchy

Attributes

Fit: 60	Lea: 51	Psy: 65	Cha: 32
Ref: 63	Int: 51	Wil: 48	Pos: 42

Stamina Points: 37
Body Points: 20

Skills: Searching (Int), Stealth (Ref), Small Arms (Ref), Sidearms (Ref), Heavy Pistol (Ref+10), First Aid (Int), Trivia (Wil), Armed Combat (Ref), Combat Knife (Ref), Throwing (Ref), Combat Knife (Ref), Unarmed Combat (Ref)

Equipment: Combat knife (Dmg: 1d4(3)), Heavy pistol (3 mags splatter, Mag: 12, RoF: 3, Dmg: 2d10(7), Range: 20/40/60), Sniper laser rifle (Mag: 10, RoF: 2, Dmg: 3d10(6), Range: 100/250/400), 4 smoke grenades (5m radius, 12 turns), Body Armor, helmet array, transponder (Dmg: +6(4); Init: +1

Being the trooper on point isn't easy; it's up to you to make certain that your squad isn't ambushed by lurking xenoforms. But you are very proud of your stealthy movements and sharp senses, and you aren't really afraid of anything you might meet out there among the stars. After all, if it's flesh and blood, it can be outwitted.

You are also very serious about your occupation, about UTRPF's importance as humanity's protector. So when other members of your squad get to joking around a bit too much, you do what you can to guide things back on track.

Jackson: You like Jackson. The squad leader is business-like and professional. You only wish that Jackson had more experience. After all, squads are usually led by corporals or sergeants, if not minor officers. It's quite unusual for a squad to be lead by a mere PFC. It must be on account of Jackson's donor's military background. In any event, you'll happily follow the squad leader's commands, especially as long as your own recommendations are listened to first.

Doc Martin

Background Information
Occupation: Medic
Rank: Private Two
Rank Points/Income: 50/$100
Donor Background: Chemistry professor

Attributes

Fit: 47	Lea: 67	Psy: 52	Cha: 45
Ref: 62	Int: 49	Wil: 62	Pos: 40

Stamina Points: 42
Body Points: 18

Skills Small Arms (Ref), First Aid (Int), General Medicine (Lea), Emergency Medicine (Lea), Stasis Medicine (Lea), Surgery (Lea), Synthetic Medicine (Lea), Luck (Psy), Street Smarts (Cha), Acrobatics (Ref), Throwing (Ref), Unarmed Combat (Ref)

Equipment: Combat knife (Dmg: 1d4(3)), Assault Rifle (3 mags, Mag: 200, RoF: 5/x8/25, Dmg: 1d12(6), Range: 50/150/260), Body Armor, helmet array, transponder (Dmg: +6(4), Init: +1), Medkit

Your high intelligence has garnered you a position as a medic. But it also makes you more aware than the common soldier of just how many different ways the human body can be crippled and maimed from combat. It's a disturbing knowledge, especially because as a front-line medic, you travel with the troops into the thickest of the fighting.

Fortunately, there's at least one other person in the squad with whom you can joke around to forget your danger for a while. That's Boomer, the happy-go-lucky heavy weapons expert.

Jackson: Jackson seems pretty competent at the job of squad leader but is a bit too serious about it and perhaps suffers from a slight lack of self confidence. The trooper seems overly concerned with the issue of rank, likely because Jackson's own rank is unusually low for a squad leader, barely above that of everyone else in the group. So Jackson repeatedly makes an issue of the military expertise passed on in the mental recording passed on by the trooper's donor. And Jackson presses a bit too hard for strict obedience in the most insignificant things. Perhaps the trooper will loosen up a bit after a little more time in command. In the

Fisk

Background Information
Occupation: Grunt
Rank: Private Two
Rank Points/Income: 48/$96
Donor Background: Factory Worker

Attributes

Fit: 59	Lea: 47	Psy: 38	Cha: 37
Ref: 52	Int: 51	Wil: 47	Pos: 48

Stamina Points: 33
Body Points: 20

Skills: Computer Systems (Int), Mechanical Maintenance (Int), Firearm Maintenance (Lea), Small Arms (Ref), Longarms (Ref), Assault Rifle (Ref+10), Heavy Weapons (Ref), Music (Int), First Aid (Int), Luck (Psy), Armed Combat (Ref), Climbing (Ref), Throwing (Ref), Unarmed Combat (Ref)

Equipment: Combat knife (Dmg: 1d4(3)), Assault Rifle (3 mags, Mag: 200, RoF: 5/x8/25, Dmg: 1d12(6), Range: 50/150/260), Grenade launcher (on rifle, Mag: 15, RoF: 1, Dmg: by round type, Range: direct 100/200/300, indirect 400, flechette 25/70/100), 2 frag grenades (1 launchable, Dmg: 16/80%/4d10(4)), 2 stun grenades (1 launchable, Dmg: 16/+/+), 4 flechette rounds (for launcher, Dmg: 2d8(7)), Body Armor, helmet array, transponder (Dmg: +6(4), Init: +1)

As the lowest ranking member of the squad, you get most of the crappy jobs. If there is heavy stuff to be moved, they call Fisk. If there's a dangerous task to be performed, they call Fisk.

On the other hand, they seem to think that you don't have the experience to be relied upon for a lot of more important things. If you can just convince them that you have what it takes for such work, they won't be able to dump all the rotten tasks on you.

Jackson: You suspect that part of the reason Jackson is so insistent on treating you as a junior is that the squad leader is embarrassed at being only a PFC in rank, especially as Boomer is only a week away from the same rank in terms of relative seniority. Jackson covers up for this embarrassment by insisting on a strict treatment of rank, which leaves you holding the bag when it comes to the majority of the squad's physical labor.

You suspect that your only hope of changing the situation is to keep on bugging Jackson until the squad leader gives you the credit you deserve.

Boomer: Boomer helps make life more bearable for you. The trooper's ready humor puts Jackson's authoritarianism in perspective and gives you an outlet for tension release in laughter. You hang around with Boomer whenever possible and would give your life for the trooper, if necessary.

Flatline: You keep forgetting that Flatline is around. That's because the trooper is always so quiet. You've tried striking up a conversation now and again, but Flatline refuses to talk at any real depth. Maybe the trooper considers you too low ranking to be worth the time and effort of making friends.

Runningwolf: Like Flatline, Runningwolf is fairly silent. But whereas Flatline pretty much ignores you, Runningwolf treats you like a fool, always trying to tell you how to do things. You find that really irritating, and you wish that Runningwolf would just focus on being a scout, and leave you alone. Sometime soon, you may have to say exactly that to the scout, if you wish to have any peace.

Doc Martin: You like the medic quite a lot. Doc Martin is always encouraging and "goes to bat" for you with Jackson when necessary. Also, like Boomer, Doc Martin has a refreshing sense of humor. You're happy to call Martin a friend.

meantime, you'll keep pressing Jackson to be somewhat more lenient and relaxed.

Boomer: Boomer is your best friend on the squad. You know the trooper is a hopeless clown, but humor is a healthy thing in such a stressful occupation. You do wish Boomer would avoid tweaking Jackson about their relative seniority, however. It's sure to lead to trouble, and it certainly isn't helping the squad leader to loosen up. Unfortunately, Boomer seems intent on questioning every one of Jackson's decisions as a means of forcing the squad leader to back off a bit.

Flatline: Something strikes you as not quite right about Flatline. The trooper seems to be actively avoiding some sort of psychological or emotional problem. You hope Flatline won't end up cracking under fire, so you watch the trooper fairly closely; and you press for conversations, hoping that any secrets will come out into the open light of day.

Runningwolf: Whereas Flatline's silence seems to be covering some dark secret, Runningwolf's seems completely natural. The scout just doesn't see much point in small talk.

Fisk: For a young trooper, Fisk isn't a bad sort. The grunt just has a lot yet to learn. Fortunately, Fisk is eager to do so, always pressing to be given ever more responsible tasks. You encourage Fisk whenever possible. It's part of your job to care for the mental and emotional health of the squad members.

Boomer: Boomer could be dangerous. The trooper is all too eager to fire off heavy weapons and seems completely ignorant of the concept of a stealthy approach to a mission goal and a stealthy withdrawal afterward. Boomer seems to think that there is no problem too big to be solved by a wisecrack and a couple of launched grenades.

Flatline: You don't really know much about Flatline, but you suppose it doesn't really matter. Flatline likes to hang around with you and doesn't expect you to keep a conversation going. Also, the trooper takes quite seriously the job of radio operator. And being serious about the job makes a person okay in your book.

Doc Martin: Like Boomer, Doc Martin likes to joke around quite a bit. But in the medic's case, you suspect the humor is an "official" part of good bedside manner. No matter how raucous the laughter, Martin seems to remain alert to everything going on around him. Consequently, the medic serves as something of a moderating force for Boomer's boisterousness.

Fisk: In every group, there has to be a junior member; and in this group, that person is Fisk. You do what you can to pass along what you know to try to improve the trooper's knowledge, but Fisk seems to take it in the wrong way. The trooper clearly resents your attempts to be helpful, apparently too proud to take instructions from anyone other than the squad leader.

The Living City

Rose's Tea Room

by Bob Kindel

This small, three-storied, grey stone building covered on three sides by climbing ivy sits at the very end of a quiet, dead-end street. Trellises full of well-tended roses climb the front wall, and flowers of various kinds—many from far lands—fill the neat flower beds that line the flagstone walk. Only the tasteful green sign bearing the graceful gold letters "Rose's Tea Room" identifies the place as a public house and inn.

Those who enter during business hours (mid-morning to 10:00 p.m.) are generally met by a soft-spoken, motherly halfling. This is Rose herself, a quite pleasant halfling woman of middle years. The rumor that she was a noted adventurer and "finder of lost treasure" is dismissed as a running joke.

The tea room itself is a large, well-lit area with seven tables and two booths. The waiters, Gil and Tombil, serve the patrons a variety of food. Although Rose refers to her meals as "light repasts," most non-halflings consider them substantial enough. Delicate pastries and cucumber sandwiches are supplemented by meat pasties and thick servings of scones and curds. In addition to a variety of herbal teas (the herbs for which are grown in Rose's extensive gardens and greenhouse), a patron may also sip fine meads and fruit wines. It is a thoroughly pleasant place to dine, far from the more boisterous inns frequented by the hoi polloi.

People who are loud or troublesome are not seated, or—if they begin to make trouble after they get a table—they are asked to leave. If Rose's legendary persuasiveness is not enough, she will as a last resort call her old friend Darby to handle the situation. Darby, a much-scarred dwarf of fearful aspect, is the janitor and generally stays in the kitchen. He clashes with the decor, since he is obviously a dangerous warrior. But rumor has it that he and Rose are very old friends and that she finds work for him because of their long association.

The inn has a number of rooms for overnight stays upstairs, but those inquiring about one are usually told that they are either full or reserved. Those who do manage to get rooms at the inn are uniformly prosperous-looking and quiet, though in other respects such as ages, race, or gender they are quite diverse.

All-in-all, Rose's is a nice place to spend a quiet hour or two when one tires of more active inns.

What is known to very few people other than the guildmasters of various thieves' guilds through the lands is that Rose is a retired thief/spy of great skill. Not being political, Rose chose not to vie for the leadership of her own guild. When she reached an age and financial status that started her thinking of retirement, she decided to open an inn. She had never worked in Ravens Bluff, so she decided to settle down there. She deliberately ran a genteel, quiet place that would fool the authorities, then spread the word that those who needed a quiet safe house could be served at the Tea Room. Spies and thieves who needed to lie low, as well as rival guildmasters who needed a neutral site for negotiations could—at a high price—have a safe place with no questions asked. Rose and her associates are the Tea Room's best defense, and they rely on no traps to guard the place except for some stout locks and a special "nightingale floor" on the third story. This special floor is constructed to be squeaky to prevent intruders from entering silently (-35% to all move silently rolls on this floor).

Note: DMs wishing to use Rose's establishment in their campaigns should feel free to elaborate upon or even change the details of the place, as these are surely not common knowledge even among the thief communities in Ravens Bluff.

As the years have passed, Rose's reputation has spread among the elite of the underworld. By common consent, this reputation is never shared with low- or mid-ranking individuals. Thus, Rose's Tea Room remains a haven for those who know that—following the cliché—appearances are often deceiving.

Important NPCs

Rose Greenfern: AL N; AC 5; MV 6″; T12 (spy kit); hp 40; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; S 8, D 17, C 13, I 15, W 14, Ch 15, Cm 13; *dagger +2, ring of protection +2.*

Darby Waraxe: AL LN; AC 3; MV 12″; F/T 9/11; hp 48; THAC0 12; #AT 2; Dmg by weapon type; S 18, D 15, C 14, I 9, W 10, Ch 8, Cm 7; equipment: *battle axe +1,* chain mail, shield.

Darby is specialized in the use of the battle axe (THAC0 10, Dmg 1d8+5), though he can wield any cleaving and crushing weapon proficiently. Darby serves as the Tea Room's janitor, though his real purpose is to remove any troublesome guests and to provide security for the others.

Sarun Sharib: AL N; AC 6; MV 12″; W6; hp 12; THAC0 19; Dmg by weapon type; S 7, D 14, C 12, I 16, W 14, Ch 15, Cm 14; *wand of paralyzation* (12 charges), *dagger +2.*

Spells: *affect normal fires, burning hands*, detect magic*, friends, light, mending*, read magic, unseen servant*, flaming sphere, fool's gold, glitterdust, Melf's acid arrow*, pyrotechnics, shatter*, stinking cloud, dispel magic*, item, slow*, water breathing.* Those spells marked with asterisks (*) are the ones Sarun usually has memorized.

Sarun is an elven wizard who serves as both cook and alchemist. She uses Rose's rare herbs for both purposes.

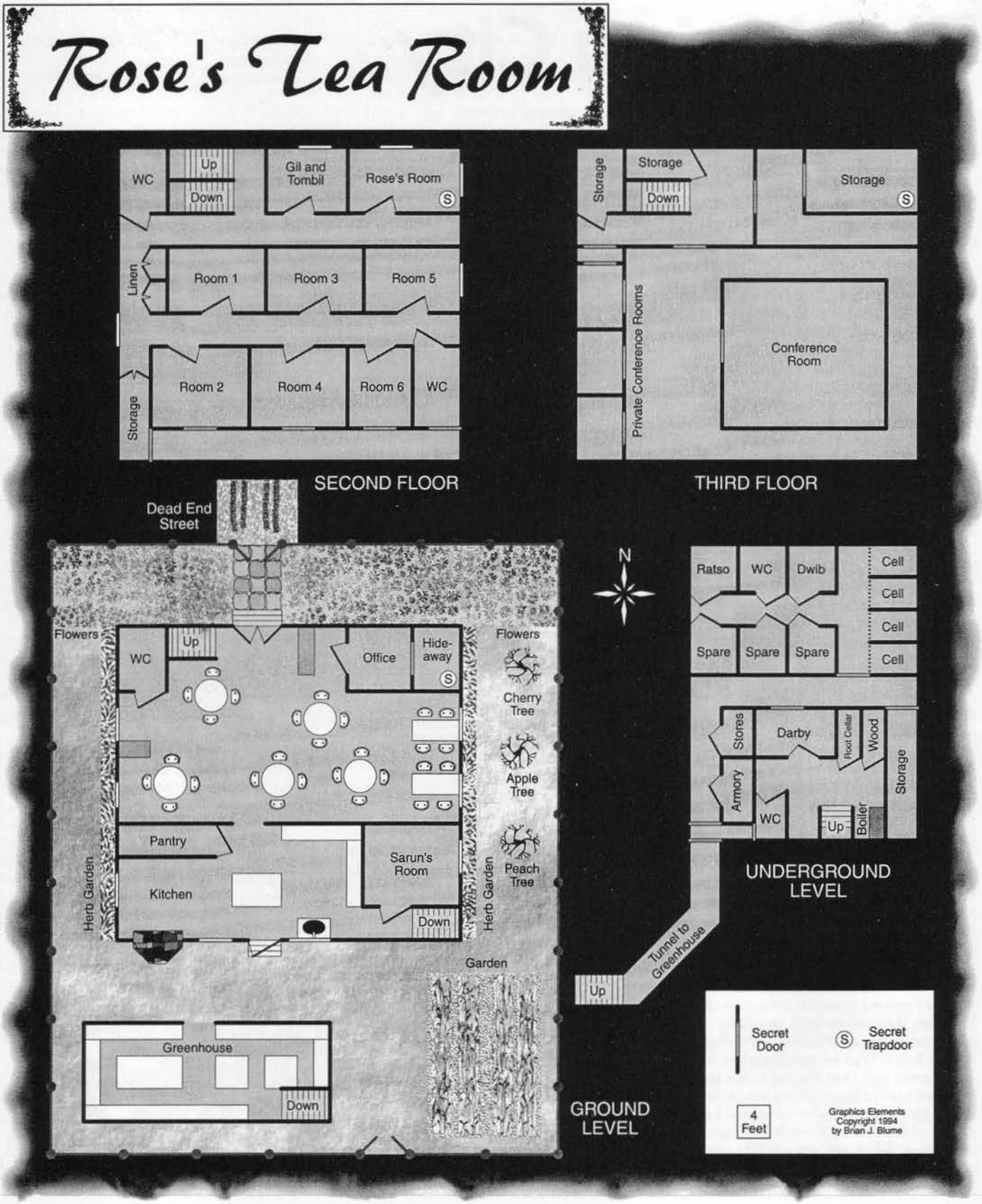
Gil and Tombil: AL N; AC 8; MV 12″; T5; hp 17, 14; THAC0 18; Dmg by weapon type.

Gil and Tombil are promising spies who have been sent by an out-of-town guildmaster to learn from Rose's experience. Other experienced thieves who show aptitude as spies may be sent by their own guildmasters to learn from Rose. (Thief PCs may be first introduced to Rose's Tea Room when they require guild training.) In addition to paying her a large fee, such apprentice spies work in the Tea Room to fit in. Rose teaches such students for two years before sending them away.

Ratso and Dwib: AL NE; AC 5; MV 12″; F/T 5/6; hp 28, 25; THAC0 16; Dmg by weapon type.

These two half-orcs are never seen in the public areas of the inn. They use a secret tunnel to enter the building. Under Darby's command, they provide security for thieves' conferences as well as the safe rooms. ❑

Rose's Tea Room



Weasel Games

by Lester "Weasel" Smith

When I ask friends who use the term "weasel games" to explain it, they typically say something like, "You know, games for cold-hearted, sneaky, vicious people . . . like weasels." Obviously, it's a difficult term to define. So let me approach it a bit at a time.

Consider a History

You may have your own experience with the expression "weasel game" or a similar term, but I became aware of it initially about a decade ago, when gaming first became a passion in my life. Fortunately, I had a circle of friends who shared a fervor for playing competitive board games. We would spend entire weekends in the bliss of battling orcs, propelling space ships, commanding armies, manipulating stock markets, launching nukes, and partaking of a host of other wonders. Often, upon my completing some particularly clever and devastating (or desperate and savage) move, I would hear, "You are such a weasel." Before long, friends came to refer to many of my favorite games as weasel games.

My own dear wife even went so far as to use the term in reference to one I designed: the *Temple of the Beastmen* board game, published some years ago by GDW as part of their *Space: 1889* product line. Recently, after having been away from that game for a few years, I ran it again at a home-town convention. As I watched game play unfold from this fresh perspective, I was struck (okay, shocked) by just how "weasely" the session was. The players were ripping one another right and left, and I had to admit that the game design itself encouraged them to play that way. The *Space: 1889* RPG may advertise itself as "Adventure in a More Civilized Time," but *Temple of the Beastmen* board game shows a steel fist inside that velvet glove. And in doing so, it defines one central concept of the true weasel game:

Don't Just Run Well; Trip Your Neighbor

Ostensibly, the *Temple of the Beastmen* game is all about what happens to six heroes on individual quests to a High Martian "kraag" at the same moment in time. Each of the heroes has a different goal in mind, so in terms of background and story, there is no reason for them to compete. But what fun is a board game without competition! So this game was designed with rivalry built into it at the player level. The *heroes* may not be head-to-head competitors, but the *players* certainly are.

As the primary example of "tripping your neighbor" in this game, most of the heroes' individual goals are tied to particular item cards. If you can draw these cards before those heroes' players do, and discard them, the items never materialize in the high Martian complex, so the hapless players are just out of luck. They may still be able to gain enough victory points in other ways to win the game, but you'll certainly have made things harder for them. As a result, when players see you discard their big point card, they are likely to grit their teeth and call you a weasel. But remember, of course, they're hoping to do the same thing to you. As a matter of fact, just to make sure that players don't miss this important strategy, the rules make a point of recommending it.

Add in the fact that a couple of the heroes actually share the same goal (and can't both attain it at once), and a few cards specifically designed to let you mess with other players—caving in a board section on their heroes, sending patrols of high Martians their way, blasting them with scatterguns and a black powder bomb, etc.—and you have the beginnings of a true weasel wrestling match.

Don't Even *Think* of Mercy

Mercy has no place in a true weasel game. Don't even consider asking for it. But just as importantly, don't let yourself be tempted to give it. This is more than just a matter of optimizing your chances of winning: it is an issue of social survival.

When my wife and I were newly married, we used to play the *Risk* game fairly often with other young couples. But it wasn't long before we decided that, while the game is great for some groups, it can be dangerous for couples who want to maintain their marriage. Time and again, someone would be on a roll, wiping everyone else's armies from the face of the map, to hear a pained cry from his or her spouse, "Hey, give me a break. I wasn't that vicious in attacking *you* on *my* turn!"

"But, Honey," the attacker would reason, "I'm trying to win here."

"Well," the spouse would complain, "You aren't being very nice about it."

Aha! That's it in a nutshell. Weasel games aren't about being nice. They aren't about taking turns being merciful. They are about being ruthless.

Once, at a convention, I sat down with some strangers to play the *Circus Maximus* game. In that game, players take the roles of charioteers in a Ben Hur style race. The order of players is random each turn, and during one particular turn, the stranger sitting to my right ended up going last. That made things difficult for him. All of our chariots had left the straightaway and were negotiating the turn at the course's end, where it is easy for a chariot to flip if it is going too fast. Well, as each charioteer passed this fellow's, they would whip his horses, trying to make his chariot speed up and crash. Each time, the fellow would slip his chariot to a lane farther out, where the turn was less sharp and the danger less great. But finally it was right up against the outer wall and couldn't sideslip further.

As my turn approached, I happened to glance over at the player, and I was startled to discover tears standing in his eyes. My kindly side reacted first, urging me to pat him on the back and say, "Don't take it so hard." But I was afraid of embarrassing him. My weasel side was just a second later in thinking, "Boy, is he in the wrong game."

When the dice came to me, I did the best thing possible under the circumstances: I rolled my movement and ran my chariot past his . . . and I whipped his horses along the way.

❑

Conjurings

New Spells From Network Clubs

The recent Clubs Decathlon competition to design enchantments for a variety of game systems yielded spells and abilities for West End Games' *Torg* and *Star Wars* systems, FASA's *Shadowrun*, and TSR's AD&D® game and the *Marvel Super Heroes* game. The bulk of the entries were for the AD&D game, and we present the best ones here. The winning spell was *Shadow Play* by Walt Wallace of the Fellowship of Steel. We congratulate all the participants: The Guild of the Elven Blue Mage, G.O.A.T. (Gamers of Austin Texas), Knights of the Empire, ARC Fellowship, The Legion of SilverSheen, Death Warmed Over, GEAR, and Time Warpers.

Wizard Spells

Animal Sanctuary (Abjuration)
by Art Lobdell/Time Warpers
Level: 1st
Components: V,S,M
Range: Touch
Duration: 1 hour/level
Casting Time: 3
Area of Effect: One animal
Saving Throw: None

Attack rolls and damage against an animal protected by this spell suffer a −4 penalty. This spell is frequently used on mounts, pets, and familiars. The material component is a feather, bit of fur, or a scale from the animal to be protected.

Aunty's Bath (Conjuration)
by Todd Lambertson/Fellowship of Steel
Level: 1st
Components: V,S,M
Range: 0
Duration: 1 hour
Casting Time: 1
Area of Effect: 100 gallons per level
Saving Throw: None

This spell was created by the old wizard Aunty Carlys, who often found herself taking care of adventurers' children. The children were not fond of baths, and Aunty discovered that if she lured them into a small pond on the pretext of swimming, she could cast this spell and make them clean. *Aunty's bath* is a derivative of the *unseen servant* and *conjure elemental* spells. The spell causes the water source instantly to become soapy. Unseen hands scrub bubbles upon all living matter in the water source. *Aunty's bath* is especially good for washing dogs, odorous friends, and pesky water-based monsters. The material component is a bar of soap.

Know Weight (Divination)
by Don Northness/Knights of the Empire
Level: 1st
Components: V,S,M
Range: 10 yards/level
Duration: Instant
Casting Time: 1
Area of Effect: 30' radius
Saving Throw: None

This simple spell lets the caster know instantly the weight of up to a number of targets equal to his level. For example, a 4th level wizard would learn the weight of four individuals within a 30' radius of himself. The weight registered includes all equipment the individuals are carrying. The spell also can be used to determine the weight of objects.

Talon's Waterproof (Abjuration)
by Tim Steed/Fellowship of Steel
Level: 1st
Components: V,S,M
Range: 0
Duration: 1 hour/ level
Casting Time: 2
Area of Effect: One item or creature
Saving Throw: None

This spell was developed by Talon Stringfellow, a famed minstrel of Waterdeep. One day he grew tired of being drenched by the spring rains, which he feared would damage his polished wood harp. He spent several months researching enchantments that would keep him dry. *Waterproof* does just that. It makes one item or creature, man-sized or smaller, immune to water. Water evaporates one inch above the surface of the enchanted object or individual. The spell affects only natural water, not water-based spells or water-based creatures such as water weirds or elementals. Further, it does not allow the recipient to breathe underwater. The material component is a drop of water.

Jester's Jest (Alteration)
by Todd Lambertson/Fellowship of Steel
Level: 2nd
Components: V,S,M
Range: 10 yards
Duration: 10 rounds + 1 round/level
Casting Time: 2
Area of Effect: One creature
Saving Throw: Negates

This spell was created by Lendolin the Laughless, jester to King Azoun I. If the target does not make a successful saving throw versus spells, he becomes instantly serious, and everything he says will be sorrowful and sad, depressing those around him. Reaction checks suffer a −4 penalty.

Projected Magnification (Alteration)
by David Kelman/ARC Fellowship
Level: 2nd
Components: V,S,M
Range: 5 yards
Duration: 5 rounds/level
Casting Time: 2
Area of Effect: Up to 10' by 10'
Saving Throw: None

Upon completing this spell, the image of an object specified by the caster is projected either onto a flat surface or into the air. The object named must be within one mile of the caster. The projection can be made to magnify or reduce the original, or simply to render it as the same size as the original. The projection is two dimensional, covering up to a 10' by 10' area. The object being viewed will be outlined in a faint blue light. For example, the caster can visualize a palace, which will be projected in front of him. The caster can see a miniature view of the palace or examine a part of the palace as if a section were under a magnifying glass. This spell is often employed by spies. The material component of the spell is a piece of glass.

Talon's Skitmaster (Illusion)
by Tim Steed/Fellowship of Steel
Level: 3rd
Components: V,S,M
Range: 0
Duration: 3 hours
Casting Time: 4
Area of Effect: 20' by 20'
Saving Throw: None

The bard Talon Stringfellow wanted spells that would help him produce more spectacular and crowd-pleasing performances. After years of research and practice, he developed this enchantment.

The caster must mark with a line of sand an area no larger than 20' by 20'. When the spell is cast, and while it is in effect, the caster must remain inside this boundary. To invoke the special abilities of the spell, the caster blinks twice and then states the name of up to six objects and creatures. The caster becomes invisible, and the named objects and creatures appear in his place. For example, the caster can call into being a terrifying-looking troll. The troll has no substance and cannot pass beyond the sandy boundary. Nor can it speak. However, it can move about at the caster's whim, dancing, jumping, and performing feats to impress an audience. The caster can speak during this time, telling a story, singing, or casting spells to enhance the show.

This is an especially effective spell for a bard, who can summon forth illusions of heroes and monsters, giving real life to his stories. He can make the hero and monster appear to do battle, narrating the scene and adding vocal color where he sees fit.

The spell is broken if the caster steps out of the boundary or if the line of sand is broken.

Talon's Soundmaster (Illusion)
by Tim Steed/Fellowship of Steel
Level: 3rd
Components: V,S,M
Range: 0
Duration: 24 hours
Casting Time: 4
Area of Effect: One six-sided cube
Saving Throw: None

Talon Stringfellow, always looking for spells to improve his stage shows, created this enchantment that uses a small ivory cube as its only component. When cast, the spell conforms closely to the first level wizard spell, *audible glamer.* However, the caster selects six sounds and places them onto the faces of the ivory cube. These sounds can be virtually any noise with which the caster is familiar, and they can be as loud as the caster desires. They might include a dragon's roar, a bird chirping, a baby crying. The sounds remain in place on the cube until the cube is employed or the spell's duration lapses.

To call forth a sound, the caster presses the side of the cube he wants to hear. Each sound persists for five rounds, and only can be called forth once. This spell is especially handy with the *Talon's skitmaster* enchantment.

Aryeric's Cloak of Protection (Abjuration)
by Ramon Delgado/Legion of SilverSheen
Level: 4th
Components: V,S,M
Range: 0
Duration: Special
Casting Time: 4
Area of Effect: 15' radius
Saving Throw: None

Ayeric's spell aids the companions of the caster. When this spell is used, a translucent image of the caster appears and swells to cover the area of effect. Any number of creatures equal to the caster's level plus one can be protected. Those under the *cloak* gain a +2 bonus on saving throws and save vs. magic as the caster. In addition, the caster can transfer damage incurred by spell attacks from one creature or individual to another under the *cloak.* For example, if a priest under the *cloak* is struck by a magical lightning bolt, the wizard who cast the *cloak of protection* can instead direct that damage against a fighter who is also under the *cloak.* The *cloak* moves with the caster, and any creature or individual moving outside the spell's radius is no longer protected, even if he reenters later. The material component is a strip of cloth soaked in ink.

Bubble Breath (Evocation)
by Todd Lambertson/Fellowship of Steel
Level: 4th
Components: V,S,M
Range: 30 yards +10 yards/level
Duration: Instant
Casting Time: 4
Area of Effect: One creature per bubble
Saving Throw: Negates

A wizard casting this spell breathes forth 1d6 bubbles in the direction of one or more foes. He then must make a successful "to hit" roll for each bubble, or the bubbles pass harmlessly away into the air and pop. If the wizard strikes a target with a bubble, the target is instantly coated with a filmy goo. The goo cuts the target's movement rate in half and causes the target to suffer a −2 penalty on all combat rolls and saving throws. The material component is a bit of tree sap that the wizard must swallow.

Fire Wake (Evocation/Abjuration)
by Don Northness/Knights of the Empire
Level: 4th
Components: V,M
Range: 0
Duration: 1 turn/level
Casting Time: 4
Area of Effect: One creature
Saving Throw: Negates

This enchantment creates super-heated air directly behind the target creature. The heated area is the height and width of the target and causes the target's non-metal and non-magical possessions to make a saving throw versus magical fire or burst into flames. The effect causes the target to suffer 1d6 points of damage plus an additional point of damage for every level of the caster. For example, an 8th level wizard would inflict 1d6+8 points of damage with this spell. The damage is halved if the target makes a successful saving throw versus spell.

Rastor's Mystical Spy (Enchantment/Divination)
by Keith Weepie/GEAR
Level: 4th
Components: V,S,M
Range: 0
Duration: 1 hour/2 levels
Casting Time: 1
Area of Effect: 1 mile/5 levels
Saving Throw: None

The material component of this spell is a copper brooch. When the spell is cast and the brooch pinned on another individual, the caster can see and hear everything that individual witnesses. The spell is negated if the brooch is removed. The brooch can be of any shape or style, but must be made mostly of copper.

Scapegoat (Enchantment/Charm)
by Carla Hollar and Nicky Rea/ARC Fellowship
Level: 4th
Components: V,S,M
Range: 0
Duration: 1 round/level
Casting Time: 4
Area of Effect: 20' radius
Saving Throw: Special

When a wizard finishes casting this enchantment on a chosen living target, all creatures within a 20' radius believe the target is to blame for all of their troubles. The creatures attack the target until the spell wears off, the target dies, or a *dispel magic* is cast. Those within the spell's range must possess animal intelligence or higher and are allowed a saving throw versus spell each round to come to their senses. The material components are a pinch of goat's hair and a stone which is thrown in the chosen target's direction.

Bestow Enchantment
by David Kelman/ARC Fellowship
Level: 5th
Components: V
Range: 0
Duration: Special
Casting Time: 1
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None

By casting this simple enchantment, a wizard is able to cast on another individual a spell he could normally cast only on himself. For example, a wizard first casts *bestow enchantment* on his fighter companion, then follows it up with an *alter self* spell. The fighter can manipulate the *alter self* spell as if he had cast the spell himself.

Nemicron's Transference (Alteration)
by Sherri and Jim Gantt/ARC Fellowship
Level: 5th
Components: V,S
Range: Touch
Duration: Permanent
Casting Time: 5
Area of Effect: Two objects
Saving Throw: None

This spell is cast upon any two objects of less than one cubic foot mass. One property is switched between the two at the caster's discretion, such as strength, weight, melting and boiling points, edibility, etc. The caster must touch both objects to effect the spell. For example, a wizard could cast this enchantment upon a glass beaker and an iron bar, causing them to exchange their strength. This would give the beaker the saving throw of hard metal versus blows and falls, while reducing the saving throw of the iron bar to glass. Each object retains its weight, shape, and appearance. The spell does not work on magical objects.

Reflectorum Arcana (Evocation/Abjuration)
by Christopher Ravlin/ Death Warmed Over
Level: 5th
Components: V,S,M
Range: 0
Duration: 3 rounds + 1 round/level
Casting Time: 5
Area of Effect: One creature
Saving Throw: None

Casting this enchantment causes a golden hemisphere to attach to the shield arm of the target individual. The magical shield bestows a +3 AC bonus and reflects magical projectiles, including the following spells: *magic missile, Melf's acid arrow, flame arrow,* and *Melf's minute meteors.* In addition, the shield halves the damage of *lightning bolts* that are hurled at its bearer. The direction of the reflection is rolled randomly:

1-2	Right front
3-4	Left front
5-6	Rear
7-8	Front
9	To caster
10	Above

Sacremon's Acid Wit
by David Kelman/ARC Fellowship
Level: 5th
Components: V,S
Range: 30 yards
Duration: 3 rounds/level
Casting Time: 5
Area of Effect: One creature
Saving Throw: None

When this spell is cast, a large floating mouth, similar to a *magic mouth* appears and follows the victim. The mouth criticizes, harangues, insults, and berates the victim in the victim's native tongue. If the victim is fighting, he suffers a −2 penalty to all initiative and combat rolls, as he is distracted by the constant barrage of verbiage from the mouth. The mouth is immune to physical attacks, although a *dispel magic* spell will destroy it.

Shadow Play (Illusion/Phantasm)
by Walter Wallace, Jr./Fellowship of Steel
Level: 5th
Components: V,S
Range: 10 yards
Duration: Special
Casting Time: 1 turn
Area of Effect: 30' by 30'
Saving Throw: None

By placing a candle in the center of a room and casting this spell, the wizard causes an event to be replayed. Shadows projected by the candle transform into the outlines of the room's previous occupants. The shadows reenact what transpired between those individuals during the past hour or more, depending on the level of the caster. Although no sound is involved, the caster may discern what took place by watching the shadows. Voices can be added by casting a *shadow speak* spell. This spell does not replay the actions of undead creatures, and it will not function in a room larger than 30' by 30'. The spell's duration is one hour, plus 10 minutes per level of the caster above fifth. The material component is a candle, which is consumed with the completion of the spell.

Salamander's Seismic Seizure (Evocation)
by Christopher Ravlin/ Death Warmed Over
Level: 6th
Components: V,S,M
Range: 0
Duration: 5 rounds
Casting Time: 8
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None

Casting this spell brings forth a miniature earthquake. The caster stomps the ground, pointing his toe in the direction he desires the spell to be released. A fissure opens in the earth, starting at the caster's toe and getting progressively wider. The length, width, and depth of the fissure is based on the level of the caster:

Caster's Level	Length/Width/Depth
12th	60 yds/20 ft/10 ft
14th	80 yds/25 ft/15 ft
16th	100 yds/30 ft/20 ft
18th	120 yds/35 ft/25 ft
20th	140 yds/40 ft/30 ft

The fissure closes after the spell's duration fades. Anyone caught in the area of effect of the spell will topple into the fissure, suffering 1d6 points of damage for every 10 feet they fall. Victims who are not able to climb out of the fissure while the spell is in effect will be caught in the earth and killed when the fissure closes. The material components of this spell consist of a hollow egg shell and a piece of granite.

Shadow Speak (Illusion/Phantasm)
by Walter Wallace, Jr./Fellowship of Steel
Level: 6th
Components: V,S
Range: 10 yards
Duration: Special
Casting Time: 3
Area of Effect: 30' by 30'
Saving Throw: None

This spell only works in conjunction with the *shadow play* spell. Through this enchantment, the shadows speak, repeating the words the room's previous occupants said—in the language they were originally spoken. A *comprehend languages* spell will be needed if the wizard does not understand the original dialog. The duration is one hour plus 10 minutes per level of the cast above fifth.

Janga's Jewel (Conjuration)
by Marshall Hendrickson/Guild of the Elven Blue Mage
Level: 7th
Components: V,S,M
Range: 0
Duration: 24 hours
Casting Time: 7
Area of Effect: One Gem
Saving Throw: None

By casting this spell upon a gem worth at least 400 gp, a wizard imbues the jewel with several properties, each useable once during a 24-hour period. The enchanted gem can *know alignment*, operate as an *arrow of direction*, *detect lie*, and accurately predict what will happen during the next 10 minutes. The gem is destroyed when all of the spell-like functions are used up or when 24 hours pass.

Teleport Block (Evocation/Alteration)
by Christopher Ravlin/ Death Warmed Over
Level: 8th
Components: V,S
Range: 20' + 10'/level
Duration: 8 hours + 1 hour/level
Casting Time: 1
Area of Effect: 6' cube
Saving Throw: None

Teleport block prevents all teleport-like functions from operating in the area of effect. The following spells cannot penetrate the barrier of a *teleport block: teleport, teleport without error, plane shift, dimension door, blink, wraithform, meld into stone, passwall, phase door,* and *transport via plants.* The spell *gate,* and a hierophant druid's *plane shift* ability will work only if the spellcaster makes a successful saving throw versus magic. The material component for this spell is a small crystal cube that is destroyed during the casting.

Priest Spells

Animal Sanctuary (Protection)
by Art Lobdell/Time Warpers
Level: 1st
Components: V,S,M
Range: Touch
Duration: 1 hour/level
Casting Time: 3
Area of Effect: One animal
Saving Throw: None

This is similar to the wizard spell *animal sanctuary.* However, it is more powerful. An animal protected by the priest version of this enchantment also receives a +2 AC bonus for the spell's duration. The material component is a feather, bit of fur, or a scale from the animal to be protected.

Aranen's Divinial Armor (Combat)

by Rudolfo Arango/Legion of SilverSheen
Level: 1st
Components: V,S,M
Range: Touch
Duration: Special
Casting Time: 5
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None

This spell is effective only on warriors wearing metal armor, their armor serving as the material component of the spell. The spell's recipient must be of the same alignment of the priest casting the spell. The spell temporarily turns the recipient into a holy warrior, with benefits tied to the caster's level. The priest casting the spell can affect one recipient for every two levels of experience. For example, a 4th level priest can cast this spell on two individuals. The spell's duration is two rounds, plus two rounds for each level of experience the caster has. For example, a *divinial armor* spell cast by a sixth level priest would last 14 rounds.

Caster's Level	Additional Hit Points	Armor Class Bonus
1	4	−1
2	6	−1
3	8	−1
4	10	−2
5	12	−2
6	14	−2
7	16	−3
8	18	−3
9	20	−3
10	22	−4
11	24	−4
12	26	−4

Eldeth's Tranquility (Enchantment/Charm)

by Edward Balyka/Knights of the Empire
Level: 2nd
Components: V,M
Range: 10 yards + 10 yards/level
Duration: 24 hours
Casting Time: 5
Area of Effect: 15' radius
Saving Throw: Negates

This spell creates a peaceful aura around the caster that causes hostile creatures with animal to low intelligence to regard the caster and his or her allies as friendly. This spell is particularly useful when encountering a large group of hungry, enraged, or stampeding animals. The material components are a scrap of food and the priest's holy symbol.

Spliff's Wonder Bubbles (Conjuration)

by John Paul Carney/G.O.A.T.
Level: 3rd
Components: V,S,M
Range: 0
Duration: 1d4 rounds + 1 round/level
Casting Time: 3
Area of Effect: 10' stream
Saving Throw: None

By means of this enchantment, a priest calls forth 1d4 bubbles, plus one bubble for every level he has attained. The bubbles shoot forth from the priest's fingertips in a stream that is 10' wide and as many yards long as the caster has levels. For example, a 6th level priest would create 1d4+6 bubbles that would travel in a stream 10' wide and 18 yards long. The priest makes a "to hit" roll for each bubble against the armor class of creatures caught in the stream. Each bubble that strikes releases a variable spell effect. Roll on the table below. Bubbles which do not strike a target pop for no effect.

Roll	Effect
1	Cures 1d3 points of damage
2	Cures 1d4 points of damage
3	Cures 1d6 points of damage
4	Releases a *slow poison* spell
5	Releases an *aid* spell
6	Releases a *bless* spell

Gloomcloud (Conjuration/Summoning)

by Carla Hollar and Nicky Rea/ARC Fellowship
Level: 4th
Components: V,S,M
Range: 10 yards
Duration: 2 rounds + 1 round/level
Casting Time: 4
Area of Effect: One creature
Saving Throw: None

Usually reserved as punishment for transgressions, this spell causes a drizzling grey cloud to form over the head of a single creature. The cloud appears four feet above the target's head and moves with him. It is unaffected by wind or fire. The target feels despair as per the 4th level wizard spell *emotion,* unless he makes a successful saving throw versus spells at a −2 penalty. No benefit can be gained from the *gloomcloud's* drizzle; thirst is not quenched and fire cannot be put out. The enchantment can be cancelled by *dispel magic*. However, the target is too dispirited to cast *dispel magic* on himself.

Those viewing the cloud's recipient also can be affected by the dismal sight—causing them to laugh, take pity, or simply distrust the wet individual (causing a −3 penalty to reaction rolls). The material component is a drop of dirty water.

Hand of Fate (Guardian)

by Ramon Delgado/Legion of SilverSheen
Level: 4th
Components: V,S
Range: touch
Duration: Special
Casting Time: 1
Area of Effect: Special
Saving Throw: None

This spell is a blessing from the priest's deity upon an individual or creature the priest believes threatened. When the spell's recipient is confronted by something that could cause death, a translucent hand appears to save him. A blow which would strike down the recipient misses, an object falls to block a gout of dragon's breath, etc. All "to hit" and saving throws must be rolled before the *hand of fate* intervenes, and death must have been the outcome or the spell will not be released. The recipient cannot have more than one *hand of fate* upon him at any given time. The duration is one hour, plus one hour per level of the priest casting the spell. In addition, one creature or individual can be blessed by this spell for every four levels of the caster. For example, a priest of 8th level can cast one *hand of fate* spell upon two recipients, while a priest of 12th level can affect three recipients. ❑

Into The Dark

Favorite Films

by James Lowder

At the WINTER FANTASY™ Game Fair this past January, a small but enthusiastic group of convention-goers got together with me to discuss "Into the Dark" and genre films in general. Julie Novak, Jim Canacci, Chris Champagne, Stan Terlaca, Dave Cook, John Paul Carney, Dori Watry, Jared Manthei, Tim Selby, Joshua Jaszewski, Alan Grimes, and John Rateliff offered comments about the column and suggestions for a list of the best—and worst—fantasy, horror, or SF films.

The movies on the recommended list are an interesting mix of classics, such as the landmark French film *Orpheus*, and old favorites *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* and *The Princess Bride*. The list of despised films is equally varied, ranging from recent clunkers like *Starknight* to such old contemptables as the Rankin-Bass animated Tolkien song-fest *Return of the King*.

Both lists also contain a few surprising entries—with the seriously flawed *Bram Stoker's Dracula* appearing on the recommended list and the quirky monster flick *Q* popping up as a film to be avoided at all costs. Of course this is the peril of offering an opinion on "great" and "rotten" films. While most discuss mediocre flicks rationally, folks can be amazingly blind to the weaknesses or strengths of films that elicit a strong positive or negative reaction from them.

Neither are reviewers immune to this sort of irrationality—present author most certainly included. There are films I've given very high marks (*The Adventures of Buckaroo Banzai* or *Five Million Years to Earth*, for example) that are rarely cited as triumphs of cinematic art. Hey, sometimes a movie just hits the right buttons.

The videos reviewed this time come from the list of recommended viewing compiled by the stalwarts at WINTER FANTASY. As you can see by scanning the star ratings for these five entries, I wasn't bowled over by all of the selections. Yet each of the films has something to recommend it, something that obviously pushed the right buttons for someone at the seminar.

You can't get any better	*****
Entertaining and enjoyable	****
There are worse films	***
Wait for cable	**
A waste of good tape	*

Beauty and the Beast

1946, 95 Minutes
Janus
Director: Jean Cocteau
Cast: Jean Marais, Josette Day
*****

It's difficult to write about a great film without having the critique become little more than a list of superlatives, noting how the acting, the cinematography, and all the other aspects of the production work brilliantly. Such is the dilemma facing me as I try to work out something to say about Jean Cocteau's *Beauty and the Beast*.

The fairy tale's basic plot is a familiar one, especially now that Disney has produced its own version of the story. A merchant loses his way in a dark forest and discovers the enchanted castle of the Beast. Because of some transgression —in this case the plucking of a prize rose—the merchant is made prisoner. Only the selflessness of the merchant's daughter (the Belle or Beauty of the title) saves the merchant from a lifetime of captivity, as she takes his place as the Beast's prisoner. Beauty wins the Beast's heart. The curse is somehow broken. And the end credits roll.

Cocteau's film stands furry head and shoulders above the myriad other attempts at filming the classic tale. (Yes, even the sanitized and sometimes silly Disney version.) As the powerful yet vulnerable Beast, Jean Marais delivers an astounding performance. The set design and cinematography work together to create a wonderfully eerie surrealistic lair for the Beast. No dancing plates or singing teapots here, but you will find disembodied human hands forming sconces for candelabra and human faces embedded in the fireplace, faces that follow every movement with their staring eyes. The soundtrack, composed by Georges Auric, is filled with striking chords that brilliantly challenge the images on the screen as often as they support them.

See, I told you I'd slip into a list of superlatives.

No true fan of fantasy films should miss this masterpiece. Those of you already enamored of it might want to check out *Beauty and the Beast, Diary of a Film*, in which Cocteau discusses the making of the classic.

Infra-Man

1976, 92 Minutes
Shaw Brother/Prism
Director: Hua Shan
Cast: Li Hsiu-Hsien, Terry Liu, Wang Hsieh
***1/2

Infra-Man is one of those films I enjoy a lot more than I probably should. I admit that the plot is ludicrous, the costumes are silly, and the acting is painfully stilted, but the film somehow manages to rise above all the Z-grade flaws. It's entertaining in an earnest, good-natured way that's quite contagious. It's hard to watch even 10 minutes of the film without being drawn in.

When Princess Dragon Mom (Terry Liu) and her horde of evil monster minions rise from the earth to menace Hong Kong, Professor Chang (Wang Hsieh) of the science police goes to work on a secret weapon certain to defeat the nasties. By fitting out the self-sacrificing Raima (Li Hsui-Hsien) with all sorts of servos, death rays, and even a miniature nuclear reactor, the professor creates the super-heroic Infra-Man!

If you prefer films to adhere even loosely to the rules of logic, you'll be disappointed with *Infra-Man*. How, for example, can the supporting cast send up a joyous chorus of "Oh, look! It's Infra-Man!" the first time the hero appears? He was, after all, the result of a *secret* project.

What the film offers instead of a strictly coherent story is an enjoyable romp in the tradition of Hollywood serials like *King of the Rocket Men*. Instead of Nazi agents, Infra-Man dukes it out with guys in rubber creature suits (my favorite being the twin, Slinky-limbed robots who attack our

hero with retractable heads and arms). As one might expect in a Shaw Brothers production, the fight scenes are acrobatic and filled with standard martial arts sound effects. Fun stuff, especially for those of you who are familiar with Infra-Man's Japanese predecessor, Ultraman.

The Hunger

1983, 97 Minutes
MGM/UA
Director: Tony Scott
Cast: Catherine Deneuve, David Bowie, Susan Sarandon
****1/2**

One glance at director Tony Scott's filmography and you'll have a good idea as to *The Hunger*'s primary strength. Scott has made a name for himself helming such slick, visually interesting films as *Top Gun* and *Days of Thunder*. *The Hunger*, Scott's first film, shows evidence of that arresting visual style. But as with his later projects, once you're done admiring the clever edits and artistic close-ups, you'll find this forgettable modern-day vampire flick lacking in story and substance.

Skimming through the NYC night club scene, centuries-old vampires Miriam Blaylock (Catherine Deneuve) and her minion/lover John (David Bowie) prey upon the unsuspecting New Wave detritus. After all, who's going to miss a few more men wearing fashionable leather and designer sunglasses, or women dressed in black and sporting too much make-up? But things sour for the happy couple when John begins to age rapidly. Ultimately, John's search for a cure draws medical researcher Dr. Sarah Roberts (Susan Sarandon) into the picture, and her struggle against the seductive powers of Miriam becomes the film's focus.

While both Deneuve and Sarandon acquit themselves adequately, it's David Bowie who steals the spotlight with a performance that manages to remain intense, despite all the distracting visuals and overdone soundtrack. Sadly, Bowie drops out of the story halfway through, making the film drag on to its inevitable confrontation scene and confusing "twist" ending.

Tony Scott, like his brother Ridley, first directed for television, creating frenetic, MTV-style commercials. It's no surprise, then, that his style favors glossy visual effects, fast cuts, and an overpowering use of music. *The Hunger* opens like a Bauhaus video, and the film abounds with shots filtered through flowing, gauzy curtains and characters haloed in light. Occasionally this style works well, lending scenes the feel of a Victorian ghost story. More often, all the fluttering birds and slow-motion softcore sex scenes make *The Hunger* seem like a Prince video gone horribly wrong.

The Devil Doll

1936, 79 Minutes
MGM/UA
Director: Tod Browning
Cast: Lionel Barrymore, Maureen O'Sullivan, Frank Lawton
****

Tod Browning is often cited as one of the all-time great horror directors, with such classics as the 1931 *Dracula*, *Freaks*, and a number of Lon Chaney silents to his credit. The truth of the matter is that Browning had a rather dull visual style, but managed to draw great performances from his actors. It's Lugosi's portrayal of the Count or Dwight Frye's manic Renfield that sticks in the audience's mind after viewing the 1931 *Dracula*, not the storytelling.

The Devil Doll is something of an exception to this. While much of the story is unfurled with Browning's usual static camera, there are scenes that show real innovation, real excitement. This better-than-average storytelling, coupled with a great cast and some surprising special effects, help to make this Browning's best film.

The plot for *The Devil Doll* is loosely based upon the A. Merritt novel, *Burn, Witch, Burn*. A wrongly convicted banker, Paul Lavond (Lionel Barrymore), escapes from Devil's Island and seeks revenge against his three former partners. The mad scientist-type who escapes the Island with Lavond passes along his secret process before he dies, a process for shrinking men to the size of dolls and animating them through thought. Lavond then uses these "devil dolls" to strike against his former partners.

Tossed into this standard revenge drama are two subplots involving Lavond's daughter, Lorraine—a romance between her and an eager young cabby, and the relationship between her and her father, whom she has despised as a criminal for most of her life. Both subplots are engaging, with Maureen O'Sullivan (more familiar to most of you as Jane from the Weissmuller Tarzan flicks) doing her usual fine work.

The special effects are amazing, especially considering the date of the film's release. Visions of the tiny assassins, poisoned stilettos in hand, will stay with you long after the film's conclusion. Chilling stuff from a film that deserves a lot more attention than Browning's more famous, but lesser works.

Fist of the North Star

1987, 110 Minutes
Toei/Streamline
Director:: Toyoo Ashida
Cast: Animated
****

Fist of the North Star features some impressive fight sequences. Yet the overall film is something of a let-down; the characters are thinly developed and the story episodic and poorly paced.

These criticism are commonplace with Japanese *anime*, especially films derived from long-running *manga* series. These films often try desperately to crush all the high points of the graphic novels into a couple of hours. Characterization is abandoned in favor of stunning fights. The subplots that link these fights together are sacrificed, too. On *Fist*, the creators of the *manga* series, Buronson and Tetsuo Hara, serve as screenwriters, but that doesn't seem to help matters at all.

The film tells the tale of Ken, the hereditary Fist of the North Star, martial arts defender of the common folk in a post-apocalyptic world. Over the course of the story, Ken must contend with his lover being swiped by the Fist of the South Star, the rescue of a little girl with psychic powers, and the rivalry of both his jealous brothers. It all ties together, more or less, in a final big brawl. The brawl's resolution is a bit of a surprise, mostly because it is completely unsupported by any characterization offered in the film. Entertaining enough, but ultimately of no more weight than a standard martial arts flick. ❑

The Living Galaxy

Killer Whales "R" Us; Or, The Many Aliens Of Earth

by Roger E. Moore

Some role-players love aliens. They're always happiest when role-playing nonhuman beings, preferably those not normally found in the player-character lists. I'm like that. If everyone in a *Traveller* game has a human, I'll want a vargr, and I'll even study books on wolf behavior in order to properly play the part.

Lots of science fiction role-playing games have aliens, for which players like me are eternally grateful. Visions of Puppeteers, Hivers, Mon Calamari, Yazirians, and Klingons dance in our heads. But there are many science fiction games out there that have no extraterrestrial aliens at all. This is intolerable for us die-hard alien-lovers. A science fiction game without aliens is like Mountain Dew without the caffeine (ick!). Where can you get aliens when there are none to be found?

Now, true, just because a game has no alien PCs doesn't mean it isn't fun to play. Some games have gotten around this problem fairly well. The GAMMA WORLD®, *Cyberpunk 2.0.2.0., Aliens, Shadowrun, Dark Conspiracy, GURPS Terradyne,* and *BattleTech/MechWarrior* systems offer very powerful and satisfying science fiction material instead of alien PCs: wild mutations, netrunning, cyborgs, terraforming, lasers, starships, and giant robots. (Sometimes you get troll, orc, dwarf, and elf PCs, too—please, give me a break!)

The solution? Role-play nonhuman "aliens" from Earth, ones whose ancestors are living right along with us at this very moment. We call them "animals." (TSR's GAMMA WORLD and Palladium's *After the Bomb* games use mutant animal PCs, of course.) You might balk at the idea of having an animal PC, but think about it: What would it be like to role-play a killer whale? How truly alien would such a thing be? And who would dare argue with you over dinner plans?

As will be shown, intelligent nonhuman terrestrials (INTs for short) have already been used several times in various science fiction role-playing games, some derived directly from famous science fiction novels. INTs can be generated and used in many science fiction role-playing games, not merely those that lack alien PCs. Nothing is stopping any gamer from playing a genetically engineered gorilla in a *2300 AD, Renegade Legion, Traveller,* or *Star Trek* campaign except the GM's permission and some established guidelines for generating and playing such characters. I ask you, is a bottlenose dolphin smart or not? And wouldn't dolphins be a big help to human colonies on an oceanic planet?

However, those games lacking the planet Earth would also lack terrestrial forms of life, unless parallel evolution produced whales, apes, etc. on other worlds. The STAR FRONTIERS®, *Star Wars,* and *Mekton II* games, for instance, make use of non-terrestrial humans; Earth just doesn't exist. In other games, genetic engineering is not sufficiently developed to allow for such PCs, or no opportunity is presented for such engineering to occur. The *Space: 1889* and *Morrow Project* games are good examples of this latter point, and campaigns based on near-future games like the *Twilight: 2000* or TOP SECRET/S.I.™ *F.R.E.E.Lancers* rules might also fall into this category. Unless you assume that unmodified creatures existing on Earth now are smart enough to be worth taking to the stars, like the dolphins in Larry Niven's Known Space series, you'll be stuck with human characters alone. (Aagh!)

Lost In Our Shadow

We can make a few logical suppositions about INTs in general, no matter which game they're used in. Some INTs, like dolphins, might need mechanical manipulative devices to serve as hands (often called waldos, after a similar device in a Robert Heinlein short story) and land-based transportation ("walkers" are used in David Brin's Uplift series). Neither might be necessary if dolphins were exported from Earth only for work on undersea colonies, but these would be helpful nonetheless.

Genetic engineering will be necessary to boost some creatures' intelligence and modify their behavior to make them more sociable and less violent; apes and dogs immediately come to mind here. Such engineering, which I once termed "geneering" in an article I wrote for GDW's old *Journal of the Traveller's Aid Society*, could also modify a creature's physical appearance to give it an upright posture, smaller or larger size, stronger skeleton and musculature, a voice box, better vision, and whatever other characteristics are deemed helpful. We'll assume here that such modifications are kept to a minimum.

In any event, the reader can see one vast and overriding factor influencing the development and use of INTs: *humanity*. No INT will be given the slightest chance to voyage into space if humans cannot think of a possible use for it, a job or mission for the being to accomplish that will benefit some part of human society in peace or war. Not a moment will be wasted giving any creature intelligence or other modifications by genetic engineering if humans decide the being isn't worth it. (Why give a cow an IQ of 150?) INTs in almost any science fiction setting you can imagine will owe their futures and possibly their existence to humanity, which implies several basic points:

1. All INTs must be intelligent enough to understand and communicate with humans, and must possess some form of speech (verbal, sign language, written, keyboarded, radio/electronic, telepathic, or a new form or combination of the above).

2. No INT must pose more of a threat to humans than is necessary. In other words, it might be able to defend itself if attacked, but it will not be permitted to randomly strike out at people because of its biological urges, the way adult apes, wolves, and elephants are known to do.

3. All INTs must serve valuable functions within human society, whether as servants, co-workers,

companions, or whatever. These functions must be important enough for humans to bear the initial burden of engineering, training, and transporting the INTs to wherever they are needed. Gaining any sort of personal freedom to move about in human society will be difficult at best, and often done only with a human supervisor, guard, or "chauffeur," who is likely to report to a higher agency.

4. Transportation of any INT colony group *en masse* to another world would be extremely expensive, unless frozen fertilized eggs and birthing machines are shipped to reduce the overall weight and fuel requirements (perhaps this will be done for humans as well). This puts all spacefaring INTs completely at the mercy of the humans who arrange for and operate the transports.

Given all this, you can easily guess that an INT society will closely mirror human society in many ways, no matter what its basic stock. In many cases, INTs will have to live by our laws, accept our social values, and surrender to our final judgment on almost all matters. This sounds unpleasantly like slavery, and that potential is there even if eventual freedom and equality are given lip service by human INT-creators. As human history has so amply demonstrated, oppressed people can stand as equals to their oppressors only through conflict, whether by passive resistance or violent revolution. (This suggests some remarkable adventures and campaigns, doesn't it?)

Not all appearances of INTs in science fiction literature work out in this way, of course. But the complete dependence of INTs on humanity to get certain things done (advanced transportation, tool-making, medical science, and communication) is a telling weakness.

Some science fiction and science fantasy games present numerous animal-based humanoids, like the aforementioned GAMMA WORLD and *After the Bomb* games, and the *Albedo, Other Suns,* and *Justifiers* games. However, in these cases, the mutant animals essentially function as fuzzy humans, doing little to distinguish them from normal people. They more strongly resemble comic-book characters, though an ardent alien-lover might add more realistic and in-depth material to such characterizations.

An INT Bestiary

The creatures likeliest for development into INTs are those that already show considerable intelligence, complex social behaviors, and a long history of working well with people. (So much for cats!) The following are probably the best candidates, with details on what makes them special, what roles they might serve, and what references can be consulted for more information about them.

Because this is a "generic" game article, not covering any one game in particular, few game mechanics are discussed. This is more a smorgasbord of ideas than a listing of specific statistics. However, game references about these creatures will give interested gamers plenty of clues as to how to generate the needed statistics for any particular science fiction role-playing game.

Whales Great & Small

You are bigger than a human (perhaps vastly bigger), but wholly aquatic. Gravity and dry air damage your skin, and you constantly have to surface to breathe. The only manipulative organ you have is your mouth—and if you're really *big, you can't even use that. You have a complex social life and a high intelligence, with an ultrasonic language and maybe even a form of sonar, but no real technology. And without technology, you can barely communicate with humans at all.*

Rather an alien alien, isn't it? You are probably accustomed to thinking of the Atlantic bottlenose dolphin (such as "Flipper") when you think of a smart whale, but any number of other whales qualify as intelligent, too. Liberal genetic engineering for intelligence might produce an astounding variety of bright ocean-dwellers in a short time, all capable of performing services for their scientific benefactors. Science fiction role-playing games have not ignored this point, and being a whale PC is not a unique idea. For example:

Chaosium's old *Ringworld* game offered game statistics on bottlenose dolphins, killer whales (orcas), and even sperm whales; see the *Creatures Book* from the boxed set and the *Ringworld Companion.* (This game was, of course, based on Larry Niven's many Known Space tales.) An expanded version of the dolphin PC appeared in DRAGON® issue #95 ("The Dolphins of Known Space"). Steve Jackson's *GURPS Uplift* rules give you genetically engineered dolphins (a.k.a. fen); David Brin's Uplift novels formed the basis for this game. Articles on using dolphins as PCs in the *Traveller* game appeared in GDW's *Journal of the Traveller's Aid Society* issues #6 and 7 over a decade ago (I wrote them) and in DGI's *Traveller's Digest* sometime later. (William Connors, now at TSR like myself, wrote the latter, and tells me he turned the dolphins into communists. Hmm.)

Outside the gaming field, you can get imaginative ideas of the capabilities of whales by watching *Star Trek IV, Orca, Free Willy,* old TV episodes of "Flipper," and new TV episodes of "SeaQuest." A novel like *The Day of the Dolphin* would be helpful, but recent articles on the U.S. Navy's uses for bottlenose dolphins would be even better (some of this work is classified—dolphin minesweepers? combat engineers? demolitions experts?). Also look for Dr. John C. Lilly's *Man and Dolphin* and *The Mind of the Dolphin: A Nonhuman Intelligence.* Dr. Lilly did considerable research with dolphins in the 1950s and 1960s, though he became discouraged about the chances of communicating with them beyond a certain level.

Whale PCs need not be limited to watery environments if given the proper equipment, but their manipulative ability and land mobility will certainly be problems unless helpful human technology is around. Bottlenose dolphins are most often used today as entertainers; other potential jobs include rescue operations, military surveillance, predator killing, antisubmarine and antidiver combat, message and cargo carrying, fish herding, exploration, wreck location, and similar undersea work. Communication with humans would be helped given electronic translators or some form of psionic communication.

An interesting thought: Recent space shuttle experiments have shown that fish in weightlessness and in an atmosphere with 100% humidity seem to thrive. A whale in a zero-gee, 100% humidity space station might do as well, though it would not be able to maneuver well due to the lack of a thick medium against which its flippers can push.

The Great Apes

You are almost like a human, but not quite. You are either considerably stronger and heavier than people, or else

smaller, moderately stronger, and quicker. Your feet have grasping ability, and your bite can be lethal. However, you cannot speak any human languages and can communicate with humans only through sign language or keyboarding. Your society consists of small families living in warm areas outdoors; you usually hate swimming but love climbing anything within reach. You know about tools and can learn new tricks from watching people. You might even know about warfare, too.

The great apes include—besides humans—one species of gorilla (with two subspecies), two species of chimpanzees (regular chimps and dwarf chimps, also known as bonobos), and one species of orangutan. All are gravely endangered at present by humanity. The lesser apes consist of numerous species of gibbons, with the largest being the siamang. Chimps, bonobos, and gorillas are found in restricted areas in central Africa; orangutans and gibbons are found across southeastern Asia. All are also found in zoos around the world.

The greater and lesser apes have appeared within science fiction literature since the days of *King Kong* and *Mighty Joe Young*. They are perhaps best known from the five *Planet of the Apes* movies and their associated novels and TV show episodes (all based on Pierre Boulle's original novel, *Monkey Planet*). Neo-chimps (a.k.a. chims) and neo-gorillas (Garthlings) appeared in the Uplift stories (and the *GURPS Uplift* game), intelligent gorillas in Michael Crichton's *Congo*, smart chimps in *Project X* and *Lawnmower Man*, and an orangutan in *Every Which Way But Loose*. And who could forget Cheetah? Not Tarzan, that's for sure. (This was an element added by the movies, of course; the fictional apes who raised Tarzan in the books were *mangani*, which were similar to gorillas.)

In real life, chimps were used in the early American manned space program; two, Enos and Ham, were carried into space aboard Mercury capsules in the early 1960s. Chimps are also used in medical and behavioral research and are popular as entertainers. Experiments in teaching sign language to chimps and gorillas have succeeded for some years; you've probably heard of the chimp Washoe and gorilla Koko as a result.

Information on apes as they appear now is not hard to find. Franz de Waal's *Chimpanzee Politics*, Michael Ghiglieri's *East of the Mountains of the Moon*, and Eugene Linden's *Silent Partners: The Legacy of Ape Language Experiments* are good references. Four other authors and their books stand out from the crowd, however:

Fossey, Dian. *Gorillas in the Mist.* Probably the best book on the activities, behaviors, and personalities of wild gorillas, this book makes excellent reading. The bibliography is extensive, with lots of potential sources for the determined gorilla role-player.

Morris, Ramona and Desmond. *Men and Apes.* Although 25 years out of date, this book presents much interesting material on chimpanzees, orangutans, baboons, gorillas, gibbons, and smaller monkeys. Their behaviors and intelligence are well explored.

Schaller, George B. *The Year of the Gorilla.* Published in 1964, this book tells of Schaller's observations of wild gorillas in central Africa. Notes on their behavior are many, though Dian Fossey's book has more detailed material.

Van Lawick-Goodall, Jane. *In the Shadow of Man.* An excellent account drawn from years of observing wild chimpanzees, this is one of the author's best-known works. Lots of information on chimp personalities, behaviors, and language is given, including observations on Washoe, the chimp that learned sign language. Under her maiden name of Jane Goodall, she has also published *My Friends The Wild Chimpanzees, The Chimpanzees of Gombe,* and *My Life with the Chimpanzees,* all of which are highly recommended. (In the latter book, Ms. Goodall makes some startling observations on the ability of wild chimps to make war on one another.)

As may be seen, other primates besides the apes might be useful in role-playing campaigns. Baboons are a possibility; for a reference, look up Shirley Strum's *Almost Human.* However, monkeys smaller than apes or baboons, however intriguing, also have small brain sizes. There's not much that can be done with current or even projected genetic/medical technology to fit a 100 IQ in a brain marginally larger than a walnut.

Of what use is an intelligent ape, however? The basic rationale behind the *Planet of the Apes* movies was that humans domesticated apes and used them as slaves; eventually the apes rebelled and took over after humans destroyed themselves in an atomic war. I believe Arthur C. Clarke suggested that "simps" (intelligent chimps) be used as helpers on space missions, freeing humans to do more important brainy work. Because apes are so close to humanity in many ways, it is possible that colonies of them might be exported into space for scientific or medical purposes, spreading them across various pleasant, habitable worlds with tropical climates. (Apes do not enjoy or tolerate cold very well, the legends of yeti and sasquatch aside.) Perhaps apes will rise to new levels of civilization with a little boost from mankind.

Given the intense interest shown in apes by some researchers, particularly the example set by the late Dian Fossey, it is possible that scientists determined to save apes species might hide colonies of them in remote areas on other worlds. The scientists might hope to give the intelligence-boosted apes a chance to develop their own society and culture away from human influences, leading to interesting scenarios as such colonies are discovered.

Loyal Canines

Your mouth is your only "hand," but you can move faster on four legs than any human could on two. You tolerate cold weather well, thanks to your fur, and you have acute senses of hearing and smell that humans cannot hope to match. And you have one advantage that no other INT shares: You are mankind's Best Friend.

Dogs have been best buddies with humanity for at least 9,000 years, by some estimates. The two species have been friends for so long that humans often cannot keep from seeing dogs as being part human. Some dogs have even developed the curious behavior of "smiling" at humans, a reaction some biologists think dogs learned from being around people. We are long accustomed to TV shows, comics, and movies that humanize the canine, and names like Lassie, Benji, and Rin-Tin-Tin are known to all. Remember Krypto? Some dogs are super heroes, too. (Wouldn't that be an interesting role to play in a super-hero game campaign?)

The idea of putting dogs in space is well grounded in both reality and literature. The Soviet Union regularly used dogs on early biological satellites; the most famous "dogonaut" was a female mutt named Laika, who went into orbit aboard *Sputnik II* in 1957.

Extraordinarily intelligent dogs have appeared in a number of science fiction novels, such as Robert Heinlein's *Starship Troopers*, Clifford Simak's *City*, and Roger Zelazny's *This Immortal*. The primal work on dogs in science fiction, however, is also the best of them all: Olaf Stapledon's *Sirius*. First published in 1944, this work is unrivaled in its exploration of canine intelligence born of the handiwork of mankind. If you want to role-play a dog, buy this book and read it first!

Dogs have infiltrated almost every part of science fiction gaming as well. Doglike aliens abound: vargr in the *Traveller* game, rauwoof in *Space Opera*, rakka in *Metascape*, lupirals in The GALACTOS BARRIER game (in TSR's AMAZING ENGINE™ system), and so on. Genetically engineered dogs are also around: neodogs in *GURPS Uplift* and *Metascape,* the Coalition dog pack in *Rifts,* wolf Beta-Humanoids in *Justifiers*—you get the idea.

If you decide to role-play a dog and need information on their capabilities, you're in luck. The popular literature on dogs is vast, and there is no end of resource material on them. Just walk into any bookstore and look at the "Pets" section. Examples of works on canine intelligence and psychology include Konrad Lorenz's *Man Meets Dog*, Dr. Michael W. Fox's *Understanding Your Dog*, *Dog Behavior: The Genetic Basis* by John Scott and John Fuller, and *Dogwatching*, by Desmond Morris, a noted zoologist whose works are always both entertaining and informative. If you like a wilder look to your PC, try a genetically engineered wolf. Barry Holstun Lopez's *Of Wolves and Men* is a marvelous study of wolves, as they actually exist and as they have been depicted in mythology and literature. (This is the book I read when I want to role-play a vargr.) Finally, you might look into the latest *Guinness Book of World Records* for information on the limits of canine tracking ability, strength, longevity, and more.

You are urged to find all the data you can on dogs' olfactory senses, since this opens an entirely new world of sensation for the character that has been grossly overlooked and abused in most role-playing games. Dogs have such great noses that they are often employed exclusively for their smelling abilities. They can track criminals, find lost children, locate missing objects, detect explosives and drugs, sense tiny smoldering fires, and more, all in addition to their usual guardian, life-saving, and seeing-eye duties. Mankind's best friend, indeed!

Elephants, Trunks & All

You are huge and strong compared to a human, but you must contantly consume great amounts of food and water. You have four legs but no hands; your nose is your only manipulative limb. You can't speak any human language, though you understand many short phrases. Your main competitor in the working market is the tractor. Tractors don't eat, but they aren't friendly, can't learn, can't swim, and don't reproduce themselves, either.

An elephant? It fits the basic criteria for intelligence, sociability, and working with humans. Tamed Indian elephants have been successfully used in the work force in southern Asia for centuries; African elephants can be tamed, but with greater difficulty. A tame elephant, according to L. Sprague de Camp's book, *Elephant*, can participate in warfare, animal hunting, freight hauling, logging, circus amusements, and parades. A low-tech world might prefer to have elephants over machines that break down and cannot be repaired. Transporting to new worlds would be a problem unless the frozen-egg solution is used.

Genetically engineered neo-elephants appear in the Uplift saga, though they are not anywhere near as intelligent as humans. I once wrote up miniature Indian elephants ("miniphants") as intelligent creatures for the *Traveller* game in an old issue of the *Journal of the Traveller's Aid Society*. DRAGON Magazine carried an article on using elephants in fantasy games in issue #177 ("Think Big"), which is still of interest here.

An elephant PC is likely to be planet-bound for most of its life, unless it can get quarters in a cargo hold on a freight-hauling starship. Even then, the elephant's appetite is likely to require vast amounts of cargo space to be taken up with its regular meals—50 lbs. of food per day per ton of elephant, says de Camp, and that's not counting the 30-50 gallons of water it will need. Still, the idea is intriguing enough that a planet-based campaign could easily support enough adventures to keep an elephant PC happily busy for a lifetime. Perhaps it's time to explore some alien ruins in a jungle, with the elephant PC carrying all the equipment. . . .

Last Thoughts

Putting together a whole group of INTs for a science fiction campaign is not out of the question, if the players want to try it. Various governments, agencies, corporations, and individuals might sponsor the development of intelligent higher mammals, leading to the appearance of apes, dogs, elephants, and whales on particular missions across the universe—though it might take time for the rest of the human race to get used to the idea.

Want to try some other creatures to role-play? Not many are as useful or "friendly" as the ones listed here, but anything might be possible in the future, so long as humanity finds the species useful and worthwhile. Try to pick something that's trainable and has a reasonably roomy brain size; even genetic engineering has its limits.

Walker's Mammals of the World, a two-volume work edited by Ronald Nowak and John Paradiso, has loads of information on mammalian species. It's a good reference to have if you're thinking about "uplifting" a few terrestrial nonhumans of your own. For more thoughts on playing nonhuman characters in different role-playing games, see the editorial in DRAGON issue #180 (April 1992), "The centaur of attention."

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The Ravens Bluff Trumpeter

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Mayor Names New Building Inspector

In what some city officials are calling a surprise appointment, Gildesturn Shakespear, a gnomish adventurer and Ravens Bluff resident, was named to the post of Building Inspector.

Lord Mayor Charles Oliver O'Kane made the appointment early this week after reviewing several applications. The post was held by Ambassador Carrague for several decades. Carrague announced his intention to retire from that position several weeks ago, and alluded to a new venture that would take up his time. (Refer to the obituaries for more information.)

Shakespear, an experienced 70-year-old fighter, was said to have impressed O'Kane by his candor, wit, imagination, and knowledge of construction. A witness at the gnome's interview with the Lord Mayor reported that the little man made a grand speech about his abilities atop a table. The witness reports that the gnome claimed to be mature for his height and to possess a touch of larceny—making it easy for him to identify building owners attempting to avoid the system.

The Lord Mayor was quick to comment on charges that he named a gnome so demihumans in the community would look well upon him. "To read something into this appointment is folly," O'Kane stated. "The appointment is an indication that I and the Council of Lords look at an individual's qualifications, not his race."

Gildesturn Shakespear is 2nd/3rd Fighter/Thief played by Bill Gilsdorf of North Carolina.

Officials Conduct Census of Adventurers

For the past several months, Vernon Condor and his employees have been counting the number of adventurers who claim Ravens Bluff as their home. Condor said the adventuring population is reasonably high for a city the size of Ravens Bluff—1,495. Lord Mayor Charles Oliver O'Kane stated that citizens should be pleased at the number of adventurers amid their ranks, as these able-bodied fighters, wizards, and priests would be quick to defend the Living City from menaces. In fact, O'Kane added, several of these adventurers have saved Ravens Bluff dignitaries and the very city itself.

According to the census figures:

Class	Percentage
Bard	6.7%
Druid	2.3%
Fighter	28%
Illusionist	1.3
Paladin	3.2%
Priest	12.1%
Ranger	6.0%
Thief	14.2%
Wizard	10.6%
Multi-class	15.7%

Of those, the adventuring population is made up of the following races:

Race	Percentage
Dwarf	9.6%
Elf	20.1%
Gnome	3.2%
Half-elf	15.5%
Halfling	5.9%
Half-orc	0.9%
Human	44%
Miscellaneous	0.9%

The majority of the adventurers are male. The census figures show that of the city's 1,495 adventurers, 1,226 are male, and 269 are female.

The adventurers' level of experience is varied. There are 758 1st level adventurers; 285 2nd level; 177 3rd level; 132 4th level; 89 5th level; 31 6th level; 17 7th level; 5 8th level; and 1 9th level.

The highest level adventurers in the city include: Mellisa Eldaren *a 9th level druidess played by James Alan of Ohio;* Regora Ravenworth, *an 8th level priest played by Greg Lloyd of Canada;* Raven, *an 8th level wizard played by John Harnes of New Jersey;* Aven Elonis, *a 7th level fighter played by Don Weatherbee of New Jersey;* Alydar, *a 7th level fighter played by Ed Gibson of Ohio;* Rorys Lawfooti, *a 7th level locksmith played by Carl Maus of New York;* Gilly, *a 7th level locksmith played by Carol Clarkson;* Sir Drax Davenport, *a 6th level paladin played by Dave Usprich of Canada;* Rook, *a 6th level paladin played by Carl Buehler of North Carolina;* and Drakkar Von Damn, *a 6th level paladin played by Dave Kelly of New Jersey.*

The census also reports that the deities most favored by the surveyed adventures are Tempus, Mystra, and Selune.

Vernon Condor said he was aided by city guardsman Aven Elonis in compiling the above information.

Meritorious Service

Rolf "Sunny" Sunriver, chief constable, was heard touting the names of several resident adventurers. Sources say Sunriver was claiming the individuals performed noble acts in service to the city. These adventurers include: Draco Greyfolk, *a 1st level human paladin played by James MacDonald of Canada;* Fidget Hearthstone, *a 1st level dwarven priest played by Craig Petillo of Oklahoma;* Haladay Fairhill, *a 4th level halfling locksmith played by Craig Lewis of New Mexico;* Aborak Thast, *a 4th level human invoker played by Chris Hawley of Maine;* and D'Luka, *a 3rd level ranger/3rd level priest half-elf played by Leon Gibbons of Michigan.*

Obituaries

Ambassador Carrague, 130, Ravens Bluff, died at home in his sleep. Carrague served the Living City for the past several decades as the building inspector, an honorary position that the ambassador turned into a full-time, permanent post. Prior to that he handled vital diplomatic negotiations for the city. He was most known for his spell-casting ability. Carrague was perhaps Ravens Bluff's most powerful resident wizard. The Ambassador was found early this morning by a neighbor who became worried when she noticed all the shades in the ambassador's house were still drawn.

When the Lord Mayor was asked about Carrague's passing, he replied: "The ambassador was a good friend of mine. I knew he had been feeling poorly, as the years were catching up with him. Still, I had not realized his condition was this serious. Perhaps his health is why he sought retirement. In any event, the city will mourn the passing of this great man. Gildesturn Shakespear has terribly large shoes to fill."

The ambassador's will stated he wished to be buried upon his death and that no magical means were to be used to bring him back to life. Carrague is survived by a great-great nephew, Doyle Lockwood of Waterdeep. Memorial contributions can be made to The Hand of Mercy Children's Hospital and Orphanage.